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AN AUTHOR'S LOVE



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BEING THE UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF
PROSPER MÉRIMÉE'S 'INCONNUE'

New York
MACMILLAN AND CO
AND LONDON
1892

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GEORGE W. DILLAWAY

PROSPER MÉRIMÉE AND THE 'INCONNUE'

A WRITER in the *Quarterly Review* for January 1874 says:—"No literary event since the war has excited anything like such a sensation in Paris as the publication of the *Lettres à une Inconnue*. Even politics became a secondary consideration for the hour, and academicians or deputies of opposite parties might be seen eagerly accosting each other in the Chamber or the street to inquire who this fascinating and perplexing 'unknown' could be. The statement in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* that she was an Englishwoman, moving in brilliant society, was not supported by evidence; and M. Blanchard, the painter, from whom the publisher received the manuscripts, died most provokingly at the very commencement of the inquiry, and made no sign. Some intimate friends of Mérimée, rendered incredulous by wounded self-love at not having been admitted to his confidence, insisted that there was no

secret to tell ; their hypothesis being that the *Inconnue* was a myth, and the letters a romance, with which some petty details of actual life had been interwoven to keep up the mystification. But an artist like Mérimée would not have left his work in so unformed a state, so defaced by repetitions, or with such a want of proportion between the parts. With the evidence before us as we write, we incline to the belief that the lady was French by birth, and during the early years of the correspondence in the position of *dame de compagnie*, or travelling companion, to a Madame M—— de B——, who passes in the letters under the pseudonym of Lady M——. It appears from one of them that she inherited a fortune in 1843 ; and she has been confidently identified with a respectable single lady residing in Paris, with two nieces, and a character for pedantry fastened on her (perhaps unjustly) on the strength of the Greek which she learned from Mérimée.

“The extraordinary amount of interest taken in her is owing to something more than the Parisian love of scandal, gossip, or mystery. Prosper Mérimée belonged to that brilliant generation of which MM. Thiers and Guizot are the last, and he will be remembered longer than many of those by whom he was temporarily outshone. His character was no less remarkable than his genius, and the strangely-contrasted qualities that formed it will be found

almost as well worth studying as his works. It was because he was an enigma when living that people are so eager to know everything concerning him when dead. Was his cynicism real or affected? Had he, or had he not, a heart? Did he, or could he, love anything or anybody at any time? Was he a good or bad man? a happy or unhappy one? These are among the problems raised by the *Letters*."

So much for the *Quarterly Review*.

In the Preface to the only existing English translation of Prosper Mérimée's *Lettres à une Inconnue*, published by Messrs. Scribner and Co. in their Bric-a-Brac Series, and edited by Mr. R. H. Stoddard, occurs this sentence:—"The mystery which surrounds these *Letters to an Incognita*, their freshness, their epigrammatic brilliancy, their keen and flashing wit, the careless boldness with which they dash off the portraits of the leading men and women of the day, in English as well as in French society, combine to draw attention first of all to them, and they are therefore assigned the first place in this volume."

Side by side with this testimony from both an English and an American source to the interest attaching to Mérimée himself and to his writings, particularly to the story of his love and friendship for the mysterious *Inconnue*, may be placed the following extracts from M. Henri Taine's "acute and discriminating" study

of his character prefixed to the original edition of the *Lettres à une Inconnue* :—

“I have several times met Mérimée in society. He was a tall, erect, pale man, who, save for his smile, had the coldly distant air of an Englishman which checks beforehand all familiarity. Only to look at him one felt that he was either naturally or from force of habit phlegmatic, and possessed of great self-control, particularly in public, where his expression of countenance was impassible. Even in private life, when recounting some droll anecdote, his voice would remain unbroken and perfectly calm—no snap or enthusiasm. He would relate the raciest details in the most pertinent terms, but with the tone of a man asking for a cup of tea. Feeling with him was under such self-control that he appeared almost to be without any, whereas he possessed an unusual amount, but it was like a thoroughbred under the complete command of its master. The training necessary to this result began with Mérimée at an early date. When only ten or eleven years of age, having committed some slight fault, he was severely scolded and sent from the room. Weeping and sorely distressed, he had just closed the door when he heard laughter, and some one said, ‘Poor child, he believed us really angry!’ He was indignant at the idea of having been a dupe; he vowed never again to exhibit such humiliating sensi-

tiveness, and he kept his word. 'Remember to mistrust' became his motto. To guard against expansion, impulse, or enthusiasm; never to allow himself entirely full play; reserving, as it were, a portion of himself; to be the dupe neither of others nor of himself; to act and write as though perpetually in the presence of an indifferent and mocking spectator, and to constitute himself this spectator,—these are the characteristics which left their impress deeply engraved upon every phase of his life, his work, and his talent.

"Mérimée existed as an amateur; it is impossible for one to do otherwise if possessed of a critical disposition; by dint of reversing the tapestry one finishes by habitually seeing the wrong side, where, instead of fine personages well grouped, there are only bits of thread.

"Early in life Mérimée possessed a comfortable competency; then a convenient and interesting employment, the inspection of historical monuments; and later a place in the Senate and a position at Court. He was competent, active, and useful in respect to the monuments; as a senator he had the good sense to be, as a rule, absent or silent; whilst at Court he retained his independence and frankness of speech. To travel, study, and observe, to minutely investigate men and things, this was his occupation, with which his official duties in no way interfered. A man of such wit as his

necessarily makes himself respected, his irony transpiercing those encased in the closest armour. He was grave, dignified, and of irreproachable demeanour when he made an academic visit or improvised a public discourse, nevertheless with it all there was a dry touch of humour which turned both orator and audience into ridicule. As candidate for the Academy of Inscriptions, he was taken to see several learned men of most formidable aspect. Upon returning from these visits he wrote:— ‘Have you ever seen dogs going into the hole of a badger? After they have had some experience, they object to the process, and sometimes come out more quickly than they go in; for he is not a pleasant brute to visit, your badger. I always think of a badger when I ring at the door of an academician, and in the mind’s eye I see myself in exactly the same position as the dog. However, I have not yet been bitten, although I have had some odd encounters.’

“Two distinct beings existed in Mérimée—the one acquitting himself with perfect correctness in his necessary social duties; the other holding himself apart from or above the first, watching his performances with a cynically-amused or a resigned air. Equally was there a dual spirit within him in regard to affection or sentiment. The first, the natural disposition, being good and even tender, with no superior

in loyalty, no one more sure in friendship ; when he had once given his hand he never withdrew it. One sees this in a striking degree in his defence of M. Libri against the judges of the court and public opinion. It was the action of a knight who alone combats an army. Condemned to fine and imprisonment, he assumed none of the airs of a martyr, but showed as much grace in submitting to his ill fortune as he had exhibited bravery in provoking it. And he never spoke of it, save in a Preface, and, in a manner, as an excuse, explaining that in the preceding month of July he had been obliged 'to pass a fortnight in a retreat where he was in nowise inconvenienced by the sun, and where he enjoyed profound leisure.' Nothing more, but it was like the discreet and fine smile of a gentleman.

"Mérimée never spoke of his deepest feelings, and in the *Letters* we have a correspondence first of love, later of friendship, which lasted through thirty years, yet the name of his correspondent remains unknown. By those who read these letters aright the man will be found to be gracious, affectionate, delicate, an ardent lover, and, incredible as it may seem, at times a poet, moved to the point of being as superstitious as a lyrical German. This seems so strange that one of his letters to the *Inconnue* must be cited in explanation :—'You had been so long without writing to me that I began to

be uneasy, beside which I was tormented with an absurd idea of which I have not dared write you. I was visiting the Arenas of Nîmes with the architect of the department, when I saw ten steps from me a charming bird, a little larger than a titmouse, the body light gray, with wings of red, black, and white. This bird was perched on a cornice, and it looked at me fixedly. I interrupted the architect to ask him its name. He is a great sportsman, and he told me that he had never seen any bird like it. I went nearer, and the creature did not fly away until I came close enough to touch it; then it went and perched at some little distance, still looking at me. Wherever I went it seemed to follow me, for I found it at each story of the amphitheatre. It had no companion, and its flight was noiseless, like a night bird. The following day I returned to the Arena, and I again saw my bird. I had brought some bread, which I threw to it, but it would not eat; then I threw it a large grasshopper, believing from the form of its beak that it would eat insects, but it seemed that this was not the case. The most learned ornithologist of the town told me that no bird of this species existed in the country. Finally, at the last visit that I made to the place, there was my bird, still following my steps, and actually accompanying me into a dark narrow corridor, where he, a day bird, ought never to have ventured. And then I

remembered that the Duchess of Buckingham had seen her husband under the form of a bird the day of his assassination, and the idea came to me that you were perhaps dead, and that you had chosen this disguise in which to come and see me. In spite of myself this *bêtise* tormented me, and I assure you that it has enchanted me to find that your letter bore the date of the day when for the first time I saw my marvellous bird.'

"This is how the heart and imagination work even in a sceptic; it is a *bêtise*, but none the less true is it that he was on the threshold of the dream, and entering on the broad road of love.

"But side by side with the lover existed the critic, and the conflict between these two personages in the same man produced singular effects. In the case of a lover it is perhaps better not to see too clearly. 'Do you know,' said La Fontaine, 'however slightly I love, I no more see the defects of the loved ones than does a mole a hundred feet below the earth. The moment that I have a grain of love I do not fail to mix with it all the incense in my possession.' Perhaps this explains why he was so amiable. In Mérimée's letters harsh words are mingled with the tender ones:—'I confess that you appeared to me much improved physically, but not at all morally; you retain the figure of a sylph, and notwithstanding that I am *blasé* on the subject of black eyes, I have

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never seen finer ones either at Constantinople or Smyrna. But now for the reverse of the medal. You have remained a child in many things, and you have become in the very highest degree a hypocrite. You believe that you have great pride; I am sorry to say it, but you possess in reality only a small vanity not unworthy a *dévoté*. Every one goes to hear sermons at present; do you? This would be the final touch.' After two months of tenderness, of quarrels, and reconciliations, he writes as follows:—'It seems to me that every day you grow more egotistical. In the word "we" you see only "you." The more I think of this, the more sad it seems. We are so different that we can hardly understand each other.' It seems that he had met a character as restless, as unyielding, and as independent as his own—a *lioness though tame*—and he analyses it:—'It is a pity that we do not see each other the day after a quarrel; I am convinced that we should be perfectly amiable one for the other. Certainly my greatest enemy, or, if you will, my rival in your heart, is your pride; you revolt against everything that irritates this pride; you follow your own idea even to the smallest details. Is it not your pride that is satisfied when I kiss your hand? . . .' After a worse quarrel than usual he writes:—'You are one of these *chilly women of the North*, you live only by the head. . . Adieu, since we can only

love each other at a distance. When we are both old perhaps we shall meet again with pleasure.' And then at an affectionate word from her he returns. But the opposition of their characters is always the same throughout ; he cannot stand it, that a woman will be a woman :—' Why, after being for so long all that we have been to each other, must you still reflect for several days before answering the most simple question ? I never know which will win the day, your head or your heart ; you do not know yourself, but you always give the preference to your head.'

" All these quarrels finally end in a true and lasting friendship, but do you not admire this agreeable manner of love-making ? They met at the Louvre, at Versailles, in the surrounding forests ; took long clandestine *tête-à-tête* walks together several times a week, even in January ; he admired 'a radiant countenance, a subtle charm, a white hand, superb black hair,' an intelligence and attainments worthy of his own, the graces of an original beauty, the attractions of a comprehensive culture, the seductions of a charming toilette and a finished coquetry ; he breathed the perfume of an education so choice and of a nature so exquisitely refined that they epitomised for him a complete civilisation ; in short, he was under the spell. By turns, however, the critic replaced the lover. He unravelled the meaning of a reply, of a gesture ;

he detached himself from his love for the woman in order to become the judge of her character ; and he wrote her sharp truths and epigrams, which she returned in full the following day.

“ Such was Mérimée in his life, and such one finds him in his books. He wrote and studied as an amateur, passing from one subject to another as the fancy or occasion prompted him, without giving himself up to any one science or any particular theory. This was not for want of either application or ability ; on the contrary, few men have possessed more varied attainments. He possessed a natural talent for languages, and was complete master of several ; and to his knowledge of books he added extensive learning respecting monuments, understanding not only the effects, but also the technicalities of architecture. Born of a family of painters, he was accomplished as an artist in water-colours ; and in this, as in all else that he attempted, he went to the bottom of things, having a horror of specious phrases, and writing of no subject unless with certainty of detail. He had travelled much, and carefully observed the manners and customs of not only good company but bad. With all these varied acquirements, joined to such noble faculties, Mérimée might have ranked high both in history and in art, but in the former his rank is only an average one, and in the second

limited. He was distrustful, and too much distrust is hurtful. It seems that almost always he wrote merely as the occasion prompted, to occupy or amuse himself, without submitting himself to any dominating idea, or conceiving any great harmonious whole. In this, as in all else, he became first disenchanted, and finally disgusted. Scepticism produced melancholy, and in this connection his correspondence is sad. His health failed by degrees, and he wintered regularly at Cannes, feeling that life was slipping from him; but he took great care of himself, the instinct of self-preservation being the one that remains with a man to the end. When the railway brought him a friend he revived, and his conversation was again charming, as his letters were always, nothing being able to impair his wit, which was most exquisite and original. But he could not command happiness; he looked at the future gloomily, and through fear of being deceived he was distrustful in life, in love, in science, and in art, and became himself the dupe of his mistrust."

Such are a few of the extracts from M. Taine's account of Prosper Mérimée; but that, in spite of all his doubts and cynicism, the man was "capable of loving ardently," the famous *Letters to an Inconnue* prove beyond a doubt; and they prove also that a warm love which has at one time been more than mere Platonic

affection can resolve itself into a friendship faithful, tender, and loyal unto death.

One word more from the *Quarterly Review*. The writer states that when Mérimée "first formed the acquaintance of his *Inconnue* he was thirty-seven years of age, and a recognised celebrity, if not quite in the fulness of his fame. The precise date is fixed by a letter dated Paris, February 1842, in which, apologising for not sending her some Turkish slippers, he sends a Turkish looking-glass instead :—' Perhaps you will like it best ; for you strike me as having become still more *coquette* than in the year of grace 1840. It was in the month of December, and you had on stockings of striped silk ; that is all I remember.'

" The first of his letters, written in Paris and received in England, begins with a reproach :— ' I received your letter *in due time*. Everything about you is mysterious, and the same causes make you act in a manner diametrically opposed to that in which others would conduct themselves. You are going into the country, good ; that is to say, you will have plenty of time to write, because there the days are long, and the want of something to do is conducive to the writing of letters. At the same time the vigilance and anxiety of your dragon being less disturbed by the regular occupations of the town, you will have to submit to more questions when letters come for you. Moreover, in a

country-house the arrival of a letter is an event. Not at all, you cannot write, but on the other hand you can receive no end of letters. I begin to adapt myself to your ways, and I am no longer surprised at anything. All the same, pray spare me, and do not put to too severe a proof this unfortunate habit I have acquired, I do not know how, of approving of all that you do.

“ ‘I have a remembrance of having been perhaps a little too frank in my last letter, when speaking to you of my character. Among my friends there is an old diplomatist, a shrewd man of the world, who has often said to me— “Never speak ill of yourself. Your friends are safe to do so for you.” I begin to fear that you may take literally all the evil that I have said of myself. Understand that my great virtue is modesty ; I carry it to excess, and I tremble lest it may prejudice you against me.’ ”

The correspondence begins in this tone, but all the letters of Mérimée should be read in order fully to appreciate the answers of the *Inconnue*.

I

LONDON, *Tuesday.*

TO-MORROW I leave for the country, where I shall have but little time to write ; on the other hand, I shall hope and expect to receive no end of letters from you. The "dragon" goes with me. I am frantically busy, yet find time to think of you. Is not that *gentille* ? You know the address, so I shall look for a letter from you almost immediately.—Always most sincerely.

II

Sunday.

Your diplomatic friend was not far wrong, *mon cher*, when he advised you never to speak ill of yourself because your friends are safe to do so for you. In the face of this sage counsel why do you tell me of such a *bêtise* as your opera supper and your ball to ballet dancers, accentuating the dots over the i's by treating me to a list of the virtues of those same frail fair ones ? So you think they compare well with other women save in the one difference

of poverty. *Mes compliments* upon your lady acquaintances, kindly omit me from the list. Really, the owl you mention as having hovered over you at midnight on the platform of the towers of Notre Dame failed signally in imparting the smallest particle of his traditionary wisdom to you, if you think to win my friendship by these frank declarations of a taste I find questionable. I am glad that you at least own to the fact that those women are stupid. You close your letter with asking me not to be annoyed at the picture you draw of yourself, but I am distinctly so.

III

The story you tell me of the young *figurante* who played the parts of vultures, devils, and monkeys, in order to support a dying mother, and who lived a little saint the while in spite of the temptations and surroundings of a theatre, is a pretty one enough, and withal touching, but it does not alter my opinion of women of her class, as a class. And why, may I ask, do you begin your letter by telling me that frankness and truth are rarely good to employ towards women, and in a few lines farther on, with more frankness than politeness, ask me to tell you whether the life this same little saintly *figurante* leads (presumably when she is not personating

monkey or devil) does not possess infinitely more merit than my own? Are you bent upon making me seriously angry, and is this the style in which you propose to carry on our correspondence? Do not, I implore you, provoke me so often. Have I not told you that my temper is not a good one? I think I must have been born in an east wind, I am so frightfully uncertain. Just how sorry I am for your poor mother's illness, I can hardly find words to say; I know your tender love for her, and can well understand how the anxiety of the past week must have tried you. Thank God that the danger is over.

Your postscript is most disappointing. Don't tell me seriously that I am not after all to have the *aquarelle*; I have so set my heart upon it. Of course I send you the tapestry all the same, but that does not in the least prevent my regretting the loss of my share of the compact. Why not send the picture in any case, and let me judge of its merit?

You are right, very right, in suggesting as a rule for general guidance—"Never select a woman for a confidante," false as I feel myself to be towards my sex in so cordially agreeing with you; *en revanche*, however, I cannot agree with you when you assert that we are in this world only to battle against our kind, to spend our lives in a hand-to-hand fight with everything and everybody. And I much doubt

whether you believe it either ; your tone in making the statement is weak, and you fall back too quickly upon your friend and his supporting Egyptian hieroglyphics. Have *you*, *par exemple*, found life all war, women all false ? *J'en doute.*

One of my relations tells me that he has heard much of you, and that you are not all good, that your books, for instance, are decidedly bad. Is this true ? Never try to deceive me. I would rather have truth at any price, even should it beggar my whole life until the end. Do you, I wonder, understand me, or shall I give you a little sketch of what I think I am for your future guidance ? Suppose I try. I am very truthful, that first and foremost ; loyal to a fault, with no half-hearted friendship depending upon the varying opinions of others, and changing with them. Not jealous, for I have too proud a confidence where I love, and were the confidence destroyed it would kill the love. Between these two estates there is too barren a soil for jealousy to grow in. You will probably smile at this, and call it overboastful, or very crude. If so, do not tell me that you have done so. Ah, there comes a weak spot in the sketch—the things I cannot bear to hear. On second thoughts I will leave the picture unfinished.

IV

Wednesday.

I am glad that you liked the portrait which I drew of myself, and did not find it too flattering, but would it not be wiser to wait and see it completed before pronouncing judgment? It is a heavenly day, so clear that God's own truth seems to pierce the skies above, descending in shafts of light and giving to mortals a clearer insight into people and things around them, hence my fear that your opinion of me may be over-good.

Little can you imagine the storm of indignation you aroused in me by your remark that your feelings for me were those suitable for a fourteen-year-old-niece. *Merci.* Anything less like a respectable uncle than yourself I cannot well imagine. The *rôle* would never suit you, believe me, so do not try it.

Now in return for your story of the phlegmatic musical animal who called forth such stormy devotion in a female breast, and who, himself cold and indifferent, was loved to the extent of a watery grave being sought by his innamorata as solace for his indifference, let *me* ask the question why the women who torment men with their uncertain tempers, drive them wild with jealousy, laugh contemptuously at their humble entreaties, and fling their money to the winds, have twice the hold upon their

affections that the patient, long-suffering, domestic, frugal Griseldas have, whose existences are one long penance of unsuccessful efforts to please? Answer this comprehensively, and you will have solved a riddle which has puzzled women since Eve asked questions in Paradise.

The subject interests me doubly at this moment, for my love is promised ; I am engaged. As an "uncle" you will, I hope, feel duly interested in the news, perhaps, even spare time from your many grown-up friends in Paris, those who have passed the infantile age of fourteen, and send me your good wishes. As things now are perhaps it will be wiser not to send the *aquarelle*.

V

15th September.

Is it *convenable* to begin your letter as you do, to address me as "*Mariquita de mi Alma*" just after I tell you that I am engaged, that I have made my choice for life, that I have given my love to some one else? Why will you not take me seriously? I find the matter serious enough, heaven knows ; in fact rather too solemn to suit me.

Oh, why do you write as you do when you must know that I am unhappy, wretched? Yes, I expect to be in Paris in October, but for many reasons it will be better not to see you when

there. Go to your fat Flemish women ; their only recommendation to me is that they are on canvas, and not in the flesh ! Make no sacrifices for me by remaining in Paris instead of going to Antwerp, it will be time doubly lost, for you will lose the sight of your pictures and not be blessed with a glimpse of me. I am quite decided that it will be better not to meet. But send me the *aquarelle* by all means. I have changed my mind as to that, and can see no good reason why I should not have it. So you have decided that it is to be the monk after all, not Valasque's infant Marguerite. In what way did you spoil the copy of this latter ? I am grasping, I should have liked both.

The idea of seeing you in October tempts me strongly, but there are grave reasons why I should not do so. No, my time then will all be taken up in getting my trousseau ; you know there is nothing on earth women love so much as shopping.

How I wish this horrible rain would stop. It is getting on my nerves, I seem to feel each drop on my heart, and I am sure a deep indenture of some kind will be worn into that sensitive organ. But rain indentures would at least be clean, that is some comfort ; and they cannot leave any ache behind them, poor little harmless washed-out things.

I have a surprise in store for you, that is, unless between now and October I do not

change my mind and decide not to tell you of it. You may judge from that last sentence that I have changed my mind upon another subject, and intend after all to see you ; but you are mistaken, it was a mere slip of the pen. I am convinced that it would be so infinitely wiser for us not to meet.

It is Sunday, and the church bells at this moment are ringing loudly, and horribly out of tune. They too, like the rain, would get upon my nerves if their hideous discord lasted much longer. I will go to church, and see if the services can exorcise the demon of unrest which seems to possess me. Thank God *mon futur* is not here ; he left for London yesterday. But I forget, you take no interest in him, in which you are wrong, for he is a most estimable young man. Would I marry him if he were not? In no way can I agree with you that the fact of being bound is of itself sufficient to preclude the possibility of true love. The idea is a horrible one, and if accepted would destroy all the moral foundations of society. As to your further suggestion that being bound to some one else would almost inevitably have the result of making me care for you, I treat it with the scorn which it deserves. Adieu. Enjoy Amsterdam ; worship at the shrine of Rubens, and try in Antwerp Cathedral to gain a few Christian ideas as well as suggestions of colour and flesh tints.—Your friend always.

VI

30th September.

"Love excuses all, but we must be quite sure that it is love." These words of your letter are, I think, the saddest you ever wrote, the saddest any one could write. What infinite possibilities they suggest, what boundless sorrow, when the awakening shall come and one discovers the paltry imitations which one has mistaken for the original, the base coin believed to be sterling gold. How can one ever be sure of finding real love when the devil himself has not half the disguises love can assume at command, and Satan's imagination, lively as it is, grows absolutely uninventive in comparison with Cupid's? And yet, on the other hand, may not too much caution lose one the best thing life can give, leaving in exchange regret and remorse as one's twin companions to the grave?

Oh, *how* sad you have made me! There is not enough backbone, moral or physical, in my whole nature to throw off the load of sadness which you have with those few words laid upon it.

You tell me that you too are *triste*, and moreover ill, and that adds to my own depression. I am glad that we are returning to London to-morrow; any change is welcome to me when one's mind is at a palsied standstill

such as mine has reached, even a fog instead of sunshine, or muddy pavements in place of grassy fields.

And so you have determined to stop on in Paris in spite of my repeated assurances that I will not meet you there. You say you will see me, or not see me, as I may choose, but believe me when I tell you I have already chosen, and firmly decided, that it is best not to see you. Why shall I not confess the truth once and for ever? I am afraid of you. There, are you satisfied? Is your vanity preening its feathers like a peacock in the sun? Does a soothing satisfaction flow through your veins and bring a placid expression to your features? All this ought by rights to be the result of my candid confession, and I make no doubt it is. Well, much good may it do you. To me it proves the fact that I am above all things magnanimous. I return you good for evil, in giving you pleasure in exchange for the unutterable sadness which you have given to me. It grows and deepens as I write, this dreary sadness, it hurts me almost to tears. "Love excuses all, but we must be quite sure that it is love." Ah, how could you write such words, or how, once written, could you have the heart to send them to me, weighted as they are with the demons of doubt and mistrust, with fear, sorrow, unrest, agony, despair, temptation! Ay, there comes the sting, they tempt me. And you

send them to represent yourself, the tempter! How dare you?

See you in Paris—no, never. Promise me to burn all the letters I have written to you, I wish it.

I must make still another confession to you. I have bearded the lion in his den, gone in person to see M. V——, and persuaded him to write to you. It needed some courage to do this, as you can imagine, but what I have still to tell needs more.

But it is best to be frank about it and confess the truth. I read the letter which he entrusted me with for you. Are you very angry? Do you find me beneath contempt, or will you forgive me? With this mortifying statement, which conscience compels me to make, I think I had better close. If you are unforgiving this shall be my last letter.

If you like I will send you a "*schizzo*."

VII

LONDON, 3d October.

Your long silence had almost convinced me that being unable to pardon my indiscretion in reference to M. V——'s letter, you had determined to let my last epistle remain the last, as I had hinted. Judge of my delight, therefore, when this morning as I was going for a melancholy walk in a still more melancholy

drizzle, the postman and I met face to face on the doorstep, and in a moment the dear familiar handwriting greeted my eyes. With what eagerness did I break the seal, tear open the envelope, and seek the first words; and how thankful, how grateful, was I to your forgiving heart in that you had made them what they are. It shows how anxiously guilty I had been, that the proportionate relief should be so great. You say that you want "*un ami féminin*." In consequence of the curious construction of your language I cannot translate that sentence into English, we having but one gender for the word friend. I wonder the French who are so clever in most things did not manage a little more cleverly in this. Is it not awkward sometimes to speak of "*une amie*" when from obvious reasons "*un ami*" would suit one's purpose infinitely better? "*Un ami féminin*," although rather a contradiction of terms, has the merit of originality, and I adore originality. Further, I am immensely flattered that you think I could fill this want and become this original sexless thing. *Donc*, I accept. I will be your "*ami féminin*." The position solves so many difficulties, and you promise so energetically never to fall in love with me, that there can be no danger. I believe you would make a friend worth having, that you would be loyal as you are noble, and, best of all, be uninfluenced by others. It will

be good to have such a friend, and I promise to be faithful in return. How a few words can change the face of nature. Since reading your letter the melancholy mist itself seems almost cheerful, so much sunshine is in my heart I do not feel the want of it in the outside world. I walked through the damp streets feeling so light and springy that it was with difficulty I kept my feet upon the ground. (Will that sentence convey the slightest idea to your mind of what I really mean?) The two or three friends I met must have thought me rather mad, for I answered their questions at random, thinking the while of your proposition, "*un ami féminin*." *I* to be that to *you*! It means so much—I wonder if to you it means just the same that I imagine it to be? We must talk it over, for now I think we might meet. I really think so; there would be no danger. With your absurd reasons for the fact that it would be impossible for me to fall in love with you I do not agree at all, they are unworthy of you, and I shall not discuss them. Why do you so malign yourself? I being your friend now can ask such questions. I like it, this appointment of "*ami féminin*"; nothing has ever happened to me in my life which has pleased me more, perhaps not so much. Any woman can be a wife, or *une maitresse*, according to her views upon such subjects, but so few can be a true friend. Will you think

me boastful if I say that I believe I possess many of the qualities which go to make a real friend? Not the weak, pulseless, forceless thing which so often usurps the name, but an honest, loyal, helpful soul, that lives and feels and suffers and dares, yet does not change; steadfast amid good report and evil report; true in word and in deed; tender in weakness, and generous in pain. Tell me, is my idea yours?

Yes, I pity you (as your friend) for the *mille raisons* which you tell me make you sad. Let me share them with you, and divide their heavy weight. What is a friend good for unless for this?—*Votre ami féminin*.

P.S.—Do you know I have been quite ill?

VIII

Friday.

AMIGO DE MI ALMA—Your last letter ought by rights to have made me very angry, for in it you take not the slightest notice of my consent to become your friend; you tell me as though it were something new to you that Lady M—— has told you of my approaching marriage, say that in consequence of this you will burn my letters, ask me to do the same with yours, and bid me an eternal adieu. Of what can you be thinking? Did I not tell you frankly of my engagement, and was it not

after that announcement that I promised to be your friend? Have you never received that letter, and is that perhaps the explanation of the curiously abrupt reticent production which has just been handed to me purporting to be from you? I confess to being sorely puzzled. The "*schizzo*" is ready, and I would forward it to Pall Mall, to M. V——'s care, only I much fear that curiosity may tempt him to examine it, which I should not like. Advise me what to do about it. I will at once send to him for the picture you mention.

Do you know, I pity you, for your letter leads me to believe that you are either suffering and ill, or else diabolically cross. Either state is bad enough for the person most concerned, but I think the latter is worse in its consequences to others. And I pity myself, for you have made me cross, and worst of all do I pity the unfortunate man who is to marry me. *Dieu!* his lot will, I much fear, not be an enviable one. Women of my nature ought not to marry; it is a mistake. I wonder why I do it?

I had meant not to allude to the ridiculous story of a diamond, the "false stone" with which you fill your letter. No more than yourself do I understand why you should take the trouble of telling me this story, nor why you should go out of your way to veil the identity of a woman (for of course the "false

diamond " was a woman) under such a transparent allegory. One thing which you tell me I can quite believe, namely, that the figure of rhetoric, called irony, is entirely under your control. I beg that you will never try its effect upon me. Why should we quarrel as we do? *Trêve d'hostilités*, let us be really friends, it is much simpler, so restful where everything seems uncertain. Do you remember once asking me a question to which I would give no answer? Well, let it remain unanswered, *mais*——

MARIQUITA.

IX

LONDON, *Thursday*.

Impossible to write anything worth reading to-day, for I am ill, and in consequence blue devils are rampant. I think it is partly this suicidal fog which has upset me; certainly this is not a cheery place in November. I am going to have my portrait painted for you, and will not forget your suggestion that when it is being done I shall think of you as *Amigo de mi Alma*

X

9th November.

Yes, I am much better; many thanks for your sympathy. You say that I have no heart; *ma foi*, I believe you are about right! I begin

to believe also that one gets along tolerably well with whatever may take the place of that portion of one's being when the rightful tenant vacates. You see, *mon beau moquer*, your teachings are not all thrown away upon me. I do retain a little of the much wisdom lying in your cynical reflections, and in course of time you may actually be proud of your pupil.

My portrait is not bad, now that it is finished. Shall I send it to you care of M. V——, or forward it direct to Paris?

Why will you harp on the story of your diamond? What do I care whether she be false or true! Pour a little acid over her and find out; if she stands the test, good; if not, and she should shrivel up and disappear, why, better still. You see she bores me. *Adieu.*

XI

November.

Are you equal to a long long letter from me to-day, dear friend; shall you be able to stand pages of all sorts of fears and imaginings, a full soul-communion of my heart with yours? I acknowledge the justice of your reproaches, and feel that my letters lately have been short and doubtless unsatisfactory. You accuse me of being unable to say, "*J'ai tort*"—but there you are wrong. Not only can I confess frankly that I am mistaken, but I can add the words

which to many people are harder still to say—I am sorry. I would not give much for either a man or woman who could not, for there would unquestionably be something very wrong about them. There is a good deal of common sense in some of the old saws, such as, “Honest confession is good for the soul,” and “*Peccato confessato è mezzo perdonato*,” and half a dozen more in as many different languages. There is something very real and soothing in that odd warm glow which comes to one’s heart in gentle swelling waves of feeling after the fault has been confessed, or the misunderstanding cleared away, and the kiss of perfect pardon and glad comprehensiveness has consecrated and sealed anew the friendship or the love. He who has never felt this weight of doubt or vexation lifted, and the warm trustful belief born again all fresh and holy, has missed one of the purest joys to be tasted upon earth. I pity those who cannot say frankly and freely “I am sorry,” for the three small words possess a mighty magic for softening angry suspicion, and healing sore and wounded feelings where grander phrases would be powerless. But why should all natures be alike? It would make the old saws useless if they were, and deprive us of one of the truest of them all, “Variety is the spice of life.” How terribly monotonous it would be if all the flowers were roses, every woman a queen, and each man a philosopher. My private opinion

is that it takes at least six men such as one meets every day to make one really valuable one. I like so many men for one particular quality which they may possess, and so few men for all. *Comprenez-vous?* Shall I ever understand all your characteristics, I wonder, for that you are a being of many different phases, more, far more, than are given unto the majority of mortals, I am convinced even by our short acquaintance. One of my male friends I like because he brings me *bonbons*, always doing so at the precise moment when my inner man craves that particular form of sustenance; another helps to illuminate the groping darkness of my mind as to a future state, his strong faith giving me a strength which I would not barter for untold sums of gold; yet another wholly disapproves of me, but the forceful almost brutal way in which he tells me home truths and exposes all my personal idiosyncrasies, affects me like a bracing tonic which I would not be without. And yet again there is one who finds me perfect, and so cunningly does he word his creed of my perfections that it penetrates my heart with sweet conviction, while my spirit acknowledges the profoundness of his discrimination in almost grovelling gratitude; one I am persuaded cannot possess a teaspoonful of brains in the whole space of his cranium, but he whistles divinely, and in certain moods he stands the favourite.

And so on through them all, yet not one of the long list knows how to love me as I would be loved, not one has been able to call forth love as love should be, from my capricious heart. Is that perchance the *rôle* fate destines you to play, my unknown, mysterious friend? *Nous verrons.*

My God, I am engaged! Both the fact and its corresponding man had entirely escaped my memory.

You will call me flippant, if this letter reaches you when in a serious mood; or dull, should it find you bored with life. Is it not a trifle dangerous, this experiment we are trying of a friendship in pen and ink and paper? A letter. What thing on earth more dangerous to confide in? Written at blood heat, it may reach its destination when the recipient's mental thermometer counts zero, and the burning words and thrilling sentences may turn to ice and be congealed as they are read. Or, penned in irritation and anger, they may turn a melting mood to gall, and raise evil spirits which all future efforts may be powerless to exorcise. Ten thousand devilries may lie unsuspected among the hastily-scribbled words or carefully-thought-out phrases, destined to play unutterable havoc when the seal shall be broken and the contents disclosed. A letter; the most uncertain thing in a world of uncertainties, the best or the worst thing devised by mortals. Were I beside you and said a stupid thing, the

quick contraction of your forehead would warn me of my blunder ; or if the thought were good and you should find it worthy, how soon the sudden light in your eyes or the amused line about your mouth would make me know your thoughts. I can hear your answer to this suggestive sentence. You will say at once, "Then meet me. Think no more of these absurd reasons which you cannot even explain, but which you persist in regarding as insurmountable," and so on, until you make yourself angry, and me remorseful. Alas, it is not possible ; circumstances are too strong for me, and it is not wholly want of courage on my part, as you seem to think. If it ever is, this much-talked-of meeting, it will be your talisman on the "*peleton de fil*" which brings it about, not

MARIQUITA.

P.S.—Remember that in the fairy tale of Prince Ahmed the clue of thread was to roll till it reached the gates of the castle ; when it stopped four lions were to be seen, awake and roaring, but a bribe of food thrown to them rendered them safe to pass !

XII

(Letter missing)

XIII

LONDON, 12th December.

You are really here, actually in London! Is the same sunless sky above your head and mine, the same *triste* atmosphere around us both? Ah, was it wise to come? "*L'homme propose, Dieu dispose.*" At any time after five o'clock you will find me.

XIIIA

LONDON, 17th December 1840.

There are some happinesses so great Satan cannot pardon them, and they do not come from God. They are the origin of all the tortures and scourgings which have been dealt to human souls since the world began, or since penitence existed. My scourging has commenced in the misery of your absence; will it end there? Words cannot say how I miss you and miss the delight of being with you. I am nervous, overwrought, defiant, reckless, in a word, just in that tragic state of mind when the very last thing I should do is what I am doing, putting my tumultuous thoughts on paper. A faint glimmer of reason tells me this, but is not sufficiently strong to restrain me from the folly. Do not answer me in the same tone, do not take me *au sérieux*, do

not mention my engagement, which I have broken—perhaps the one act of my life which deserves commendation. Write me one of your airy unserious letters, with no deep meaning to it, like a cool fresh hand laid lightly on a burning head tormented with sick fancies and evil dreams. Not too dear a hand, which would thrill one with its touch, or distress one lest its owner should tire in the act of standing by the couch and ministering to the pain, but one that is only kind and compassionate, belonging to a good dear soul who would not have you turn and thank him, or bid him rest, only wishing you to sleep and forget. Ay, forget. Memory is counted a good thing to possess, but is not forgetting a far higher art, a vastly better thing? Yet not for all the world could give would I forget the bliss unspeakable of the days just past. Write to me, as I have said, lightly, taking no heed of my tragic gloominess. My head aches, I long for the cool compassionate hand.—*A toi toujours.*

XIV

CHÂTEAU BEAUSÉJOUR,
16th February 1842.

Shall you be glad to hear from me again, *cher ami*? I answer the question for myself, and write. As you will see by the heading of

my letter, I am with our kind old friend Madame de C——, but in a day or two I go to England for a short visit, after which my plans are uncertain. You promised me once some souvenirs of your Eastern travels (not the Turkish slippers ; those I still refuse) ; send them to me here, before I leave. From England I will send you a "protocol" in some measure outlining our future relations ; do you not find the idea a rather wise one ? I am well, and very happy at the prospect of hearing from you again, perhaps seeing you, of that anon. When in England I go direct to Castle D——, Lord D——'s place in Surrey, which they tell me is one of those houses best worth seeing in the country. I will give you no news of myself until I hear from you, and although your letter will, I hope, reach me here, I shall not answer it until I reach D——. Madame de C—— begs me to send *mille amitiés de sa part*. Shall I sign myself

MARIQUITA ?

XV

D—— CASTLE, SURREY,
March 1842.

Where have I read that the gift of a mirror is either the most delicate compliment or the most deliberate insult ? With what you will probably be pleased to term my "infernal coquetry," I choose to flatter myself that the

lovely thing you call "*un miroir Turc*," and which came to me quite safely before I left the Château Beauséjour, is meant as the former. Thank you so much ; it is a million times better than the slippers. When you mentioned comfitures of rose, bergamot, and jasmine, it sounded more like food for angels than for mortals cursed with digestions, but oh, the sticky sweetness of the dreadful things, how can you like them? Frankly, they are not to my taste. One jar I gave, as you told me, to Madame de C——, and she said far more amiable things about it than I possibly can, if I am to retain any regard for veracity. But thank you again so much for the mirror.

A curious thing has happened to me. An old gentleman—and not so very old either—who knew me from babyhood died suddenly, and left me all his fortune. Why, he alone knew, and as he has taken the knowledge with him to that place from which no traveller returns, small chance exists of any one else ever being enlightened as to his motives. I can hardly understand my new estate as yet, and strangely enough do not feel tempted to spend a penny of my unaccustomed wealth. I should have thought that any one blessed with the extravagant tastes which I possess, after having had them repressed all through life, would rush into wild expenditure, buy everything, and throw money away senselessly,

but this absence of all desire to spend anything, in me of all living people, is incomprehensible. I suppose it is the first strangeness of knowing that I could be lavish if I would. I think I should like to travel, I have seen so few places or things, and the world contains so many. Write me a long account of your journeyings, and tell me what is best worth the time spent upon it. I have a fancy to go to different countries, not as a mere tourist, to "do the sights" in as short a time as possible, but to settle for some length of time in some one attractive spot, to study the languages in the countries they severally belong to, and study the people, their ways and national characteristics, at the same time. What think you of my idea? I feared that my last letter would anger you, and was not therefore astonished at your not answering it. The protocol I felt sure you would disapprove of; all the same, I think that I did right in sending it.¹ See how forgiving I am for your total disregard of it, I write humbly asking your advice as to the disposition of myself and my new importance in the coming years, answer me nicely, and send me that little history of yourself and your journeyings.

This old castle of Lord D—— is delicious; how I wish you could enjoy it with me. It is positively steeped and saturated in memories,

¹ The letter referred to is evidently lost.

the walls have grown gray with all that they have seen and heard, the very stones seem mellow with the patience and humbleness which hoary old Time alone can bring. So much has happened here, so many great ones of the earth have lived and died in these wide wainscoted rooms and shadowy corridors and noble halls, that I wonder visible palpable spirits do not meet one at every turn. I almost wish they did, and that they would stop and tell us of the buried past, and whether it is true that they think the present is puny and bloodless, the life of to-day a mere faint copying of the good old times so stirring and bold.

To-morrow I return to London, but only for a day or two. Write to me there as soon as you receive this, if you are not still ill-tempered. —Adieu. *Je vous aime.*

XVI

PARIS, 11th March 1842.

I left London suddenly, and have been here for the past three days, but purposely have not let you know. To-night I leave Paris for Italy with Madame C——. Your charming letter reached me just before I left London, and the account of your travels makes me long still more to see foreign lands, therefore I go. You ask me if I have changed, and add that you are

impatiently waiting for me to become "*moins jolie*" before again meeting me. To punish you for this wicked wish I will tell you that I am *not* "*moins jolie*" than when you saw me last. My mirror, your delightful Turkish one, tells me decidedly a flattering tale which I should not have mentioned to you but for this unholy wish of yours. I believe I could rival your beauty of Saragosa should we meet. As a small souvenir I send you a purse, but feel obliged to confess that I did not embroider it myself.—*Au revoir.*

XVII

Wednesday, April 1842.

You actually saw me when I was in Paris and yet did not speak to me! How can you own to such a baseness? It is just as well that you add the statement that the feeling which prevented you from doing so was "*mesquin.*" It may have been my "satanic pride," as you forcibly put it, which made me pass through without telling you, but pray what term would you apply to your own conduct in seeing me, half coming to speak to me, and then letting me go my way in silence whilst silently going yours? Do not write to me of egotism and hypocrisy if calmly and in cold blood you did this thing. Must we always quarrel? No,

you have not the right to scold me, as in a little spasm of repentance later on in your letter you wisely mention. If you could but know all! I had no time before leaving Paris to let you know at what date we expect to be in Naples. Madame de C—— is an uncertain mortal like myself, therefore our united plans are doubly uncertain. I will ask her if she remembers the occasion you mention, but that you upon any occasion ever played the rôle of "*niais*" I cannot believe. I am half sorry now that I did not let you know I was in Paris. It being morally impossible to go back to that time and to decide anew and differently, I can say this without consequences. But only in speech can I tell you of my experiences of the last two years, not on paper. The phases of wifehood and widowhood safely passed, the change in the woman's "legal status" which long ago you told me invariably affected her for the worse. Will you find it so, I wonder, in my case? *Eh bien*, we have not met, the tale is not yet told, and as yet you can know nothing. I half long, half dread, to meet you, so great is the gulf that has opened and widened and closed between us since those sunless golden December days in London.

XVIII

Perhaps I have remained childish in many things, and very glad am I if because of this fact I can be childishly delighted at your saying that my eyes please you, that they even compare favourably with those of the beauties of Constantinople and Smyrna, to whom you have doubtless said so many more amiable things than you say to me. Why waste your time in repeating so often that I am a hypocrite? In your heart of hearts you know the statement is cruelly untrue, yet in the face of this you quote my own language to me in Jonathan Swift's immoral maxim—"A lie is too good a thing to be wasted"—thinking by it to convince me of the care with which you employ a lie. I send you an essence; translate the word into its real meaning and cease reproaching me because I am trying to do what I believe to be right.

(The remainder of this letter is missing.)

XIX

(Missing)

XX

D—, 10th July 1842.

While you are amusing yourself at Avignon I am leading the quietest and most studious life possible in this tiny Swiss village lost among mountains and lakes, where I walk and row and swim for exercise, lest too much learning should drive me mad. I am trying to master Greek, and am at the same time reading Pope's translation of Homer. In time, if the quiet of my present life continues, I may accomplish something. You give me no definite news about your chance for becoming one of the immortals. It is the only kind of immortality I wish for you just yet. To see you an Academician would give me immense pleasure and pride, to lose you from this life would, I think, kill me, or, worse than that, leave me to live with life's light extinguished. I felt sure that you would read my expression aright, and knew that by "essence" I meant friendship. But here, in this quiet spot so far removed from the falseness of the world, so near to God's heaven where truth shines in the blue of the sky above and is reflected in the crystal waters below, touching the white mountain-tops as they reach far beyond the delusions of earth, here with the very air breathing truth in its pure freshness untainted by contact with earth

or things earthy, some inward force stronger than myself compels me to write that which I know will make you angry, and you will answer with scornful cynical words, which will cut and hurt me. Yet even knowing this, perhaps because of knowing it, the truth around me in sky and air and crystal water forces me to speak. It is not only friendship that I feel, but love so strong that every good resolution I have made snaps like glass in frosty weather. Therefore I see but one way to end the struggle—half measures are useless, I must break off everything. If I write to you, I say what I have promised myself not even to think ; if I see you, it is worse still. You have told me your story of the *pain blanc* and the *pain bis* at the very moment when it does me good in helping me to see things clearly, not exactly the effect you intended it to have perhaps, but the one which of itself it has had. We must meet no more, and I must write to you no more. Nothing is left me to give you save my prayers, and for all good and for every blessing these shall be yours.—Adieu.

XXI

D—, 29th July 1842.

I give it up—you are incorrigible—you are past praying for! Let us be friends again as

before. Our journey to Italy must be much later than I hoped; *en attendant* I daily go deeper into Greek, and am becoming much interested in it. I send this to Paris, as it is, I fancy, too late now to catch you at Avignon.

XXII

D—, 5th September 1842.

Quel conte de fées is this you tell me *à propos* of a mysterious female travelling alone with you for upwards of some fifty hours or so? Are you emulating the pious and most moral Dean Swift in your old age, and shall you write a history of still another "sentimental journey"? I can only trust that a kind Providence will protect you as it did him, and that with him you will be able devoutly to exclaim, your eyes raised to heaven and gratitude filling your heart the while, "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." Shall you take this *aventure de voyage* as the foundation for that new moral novel of which you spoke to me in your last letter? I send you a scrap of my Greek writing, let me know if you can decipher it.—*Mille amitiés.*

XXIII

D—, 12th October.

We are just leaving this quiet spot where I have passed through several phases of feeling in regard to you.

The time spent here has been one of those pauses in life which are, I think, given to mortals for a purpose. One of those intervals where, if they will but face the music and answer honestly the questions conscience puts to them, those answers must of necessity prove how they have used the limitless freedom granted them as individual free agents. The choice between good and evil which, when closely looked into, assumes an appalling responsibility, has been their own willing choice, and nothing further is left for them to do but manfully abide the issue. The only trouble is, that if the pause be too long and the examination prove unsatisfactory, a restlessness follows, and, like the possessed one in the parable, "The last state of that man is worse than the first." Self-introspection may be useful at times, doubtless it is so, but I hold strongly to the belief that in no case can fruitless looking back be of any avail. No regret or remorse can undo the past; the record of each act is written and sealed and closed for ever. Why waste the strength of the present in useless repinings, in

utterly futile wishes for the "might have been"? The second stage of the pause has come to me, and an intolerable restlessness possesses me. To-morrow we leave the mountains and this chilly clarified air of crystal truth, betaking ourselves we do not quite know where, perhaps Italy, perhaps Paris.

Are there any good Greek novels to be had? You once suggested that I would end by becoming an author, but have no fear. I may have committed many follies, and may commit still more before the time allotted me for follies has gone to swell the roll of years, but that weakest of all weaknesses, that crowning folly of follies, writing a book, can at least never be laid to the door of *Votre amie dévouée*.

XXIV

PARIS, *Wednesday, October 1842.*

I am here, but contrary to your expectation; you see I tell you of the fact. My cousin, Madame G—— and my brother are both with me.

XXV

Thursday.

Your note has just come. Enchanted to accept your *loge* at the Italian's to-night. My brother will accompany me. MARIQUITA.

XXVI

Sunday Evening, October 1842.

"A Roland for your Oliver." You told me once of a dream that you had had ; of a garden in Valencia, where I was with you, and where you spoke a language which in your waking hours you do not understand, and attempted to do a deed which in reality would be impossible to you, namely, to crush to death a woman (your false diamond) with a heavy stone from the wall above. Now hear my dream, which made last night one long hour of bewildered misery to me. As in yours, we two were alone together in some strange country, unlike any I have ever seen, with wide, far-reaching deserts all around us, rippling with fine golden sand, hot and glinting in the sun. The sky was of a blue which seemed to live, so fervid was it, so penetrating in the warmth, and depth, and richness of its colour, while not a cloud broke the evenness of its sapphire surface. No trees were there of any kind save only one, but that one so perfect in its slender symmetry, so delicate in the tender tinting of its drooping feathery branches, each one a wide long leaf divided into thin pointed smaller leaves, the whole a thing of such exquisite and matchless beauty that I knew I stood beneath an Eastern palm. The still loveliness of the scene was

marred only by one unsightly object, but that a ghastly one. Bleached and dry the gaunt skeleton of a camel lay on the glistening sand, its whitened bones, which were picked clean by carrion birds, telling in their bare mute stillness of the noble-hearted beast who had bravely struggled on with weakening limbs and failing breath, courageously keeping up with the caravan laden with costly stuffs and fragrant spices, the treasured products of other lands which were being brought back across long miles of desert wastes. Telling so pitifully also of how at last the limbs refused to carry the brave heart farther, of how the laboured breath fluttered painfully, giving one great sigh of almost human pain, then stopped for ever. But not before a suffering also almost human had come to the spirit of the great awkward beast, who, with dying eyes turning slowly from side to side, watched the halt made by the caravan, and heard the order given to unload the bags of silks and spices which it had carried so far, to take off the trappings and coloured worsted tassels of which it had been so proud, and saw all these borne away and placed on other beasts, strong and still of use. Then came the order to go forward, and the endless line of camels and men and gay brilliant colours stretched out along the sand, growing smaller and smaller as they went on towards friends and welcome and home, until at last there was only a speck in

the far distance, each moment growing smaller and smaller still until it was gone, and nothing remained but sand and sky and deadly burning heat. Haply the glazing eyes grew dim and sightless before those other different specks against the vivid blue took form and shape and came steadily nearer, the ghoulish carrion birds. In my dream you stood beneath the palm alert and wakeful, but a strange dull apathy stole slowly over me in the sultry noon-day heat, and I could not clearly see the bright forms coming suddenly out of space, lovely women from all four corners of the world, hair all golden, or burnished bronze, or richest black, eyes of all colours flashing brilliant glances, and laughing, tempting lips calling softly in tones like fairy music. They were all around us, these witching shapes of beauty, but so drowsy was I, that I heard and saw too vaguely to really comprehend, until at last my heavy eyes half closed, your face the last and only one I looked upon, and even when the sleep-drugged lids dropped wholly, the impress of your features was still beneath them as I fell into a deep dreamless calm. When I awoke (in my dream) it was cool still starlight, and I waked so gently that only my eyes unclosed, my body did not move. The palm still reached towards heaven in soft faint dusky lines, and a light breeze stirred the feathery leaves which at mid-day had not moved. I spoke your name, but no

answer disturbed the starlit stillness, and I thought that perhaps you too slept. Slowly remembrance of the waking day came back to me, and the lovely forms of the tempting women grew distinct and brilliant to my mind as they had not seemed when actually before my eyes. The music voices seemed to call you still, but far, far off, like distant echoes. I started up, and the second time spoke your name with sharp distinctness which seemed to cut the stillness of the night like a pointed instrument. Only my own voice answered me, and I looked wildly around. The bones of the dead camel gleamed ghostly white, the palm was beside me in its exquisite beauty, the star-studded heaven above, the waste of desert all around, but you were gone, I was alone. With a piercing cry I awoke, trembling and cold. Will you interpret my dream for me? you know that I have never refused anything that you have asked. How good of you to say that you have an Etruscan seal for me; I will use it in sealing my letters to you, but never when I write to others.

XXVII

So you do not interpret my dream after all, only wonder where I have learned that you have friends in the four quarters of the globe,

and add the monstrous fable that in reality you possess but one in Spain, or as you idiomatically express it, "*je n'en ai qu'un ou qu'une à Madrid.*" The number strikes me as modest for a man of your undoubted merit, but then I know that you are modest, and moreover discreet with a discreetness far beyond that generally vouchsafed to your sex. Your original idea of the three heads amuses me vastly, and I am puzzling the one which I know to be actually fastened upon my own shoulders with vain imaginings as to what third quality can possibly remain in me which is worthy to join those of a coquette and a diplomatist.

Are you really ill, or do you say so merely to excite my compassion, which for you, as well you know, flows in a plenteous stream at a moment's notice? No, you looked far too vigorous the other day for it to be possible that illness and you have aught in common. The impression you then left upon me was so perfectly agreeable a one, that in justice to you and to myself I find it wise to leave it undisturbed. You could never again, I believe, be so delightful, and in order that this impression may remain unspoiled and tenderly enshrined within my memory, I have decided not to see you again during the remainder of my stay in Paris.

XXVIII

PARIS, November 1842.

As we seem to be remaining on here indefinitely, ten thousand annoying things having arisen to prevent, for the moment at least, the Italian journey, I write to you again. The sentence in your last letter telling me that you are really ill, touched my heart, which, believe me, is not so hard as you suppose it to be, only somewhat curiously constituted, and probably different from those belonging to other women you have met.

I quite long for the seal you have promised me ; it exactly suits my fancy. You must one day when we meet (should we ever meet again) tell me the meaning of the device. In return I will explain to you the seal I generally use—a six-sided one having mottoes in French, English, Italian, Arabic, Latin, and German. The number, you see, allows of two for each of my three characters, Diplomatist, Coquette, and that mysterious third whose title you so cruelly withhold from me. *À propos* of German, I send you a little song, "Das Lied des Clærchens," which I have copied out myself, only the end, the very end, I have not written. Some day that too I must tell you. They seem to be accumulating, these bits of information which can only be imparted orally, not by pen and

pencil. If only I could be sure that you would be as charming as you were at our last meeting, I would without hesitation name the hour for another, but, pardon my saying so, you are just the least trifle uncertain. Look into my eyes and tell me if this be not the truth.

You remember Madame de P—— and her *mauvaise langue* and abominable rudeness to me some time ago? Well, precisely Madame de P—— did I meet to-day when strolling through the gallery of the Louvre, and had she been my dearest friend she could not have shown more pleasure in encountering me. She seemingly ignored completely that anything but the most cordial relations had ever existed between us; apparently had quite forgotten that her language, both to me and of me, had been anything but parliamentary, in a word, deported herself entirely as a good friend, while I know that she has been, and probably still is, one of my most unscrupulous enemies. How can you account for the fact that instead of being enraged at her hypocrisy I was merely amused, after a slow unexcited fashion, at her entire change of tactics? She is a worldly woman, and to a certain extent a clever one, therefore she has reasons for the change which she feels it is worth her while to make, and it is deliberately that she forgets and ignores any past unpleasantness. Again I ask, Why was I agreeable to that woman? For I was; agreeable not in the

sense of putting myself out in any way, but I did not snub her, *as* she had every right to expect that I should ; I did not make her new *rôle* at all difficult for her, on the contrary, I rather helped her over the stile as I would have helped a lame dog who had once bitten me. I believe that there must be a certain altitude of cool comfortable indifference which if once reached by mortals renders them positively delightful. They become convinced that life is too short and people in general too unimportant to allow the one to be disturbed, or the other to disturb them, and as a consequence no one has power to irritate them, or vex them, or move them to violent emotion of any kind, while they in turn grow placidly inclined towards every one. This really is the only argument I can find to explain my agreeable delightfulness to Madame de P——, who, I am certain, thought me all of that. There was no forgiving Christian charity in it ; no slightest wish to resume our old friendly relations ; only the most absolute indifference. I should not care if I never saw her again, but if I met her to-morrow I should be just as agreeable to her as I was to-day.

A ring has come at the outer door of the apartment. What unqualified happiness would be my portion at this moment if I could be certain that within the next I should see you, hear you speak, and look into your eyes ; if I could be sure that your hand had rung the bell,

and that quickly I should have you by my side, feel your breath upon my cheek, and drink in that intoxicating sense of nearness which makes each nerve thrill with a joy so deep it is almost pain! Yet more than ever I believe that it is wiser, far wiser, for us not to meet. *Aufwiedersehn.*

P.S.—The visitor announced by the bell was a cadaverous-looking priest bringing a subscription-book for a female orphan asylum!

XXIX

(Letter missing)

XXX

PARIS, *December 1842.*

MON CHER AMI INSOUCIANT—*Pas* possible to receive your gracious visit to-day, for still another brother has come to join me, and I owe to him at least the first twenty-four hours of his stay in Paris.

Surely it was for you, *mon cher*, that the description given of a friend of mine was originally intended. He is a trifle cynical, this friend, and decidedly pessimistic, and of him it was reported that he never believed in anything until he saw it, and then he was convinced that it was an optical illusion. The accuracy of

the description struck me. Have you by chance sent the Etruscan seal to your one friend at Madrid?

XXXI

Sunday Evening.

On Tuesday at two o'clock, if you will, we might try the Musée, that is, if this evil thing called a headache has by that time returned to the lower regions where it rightly belongs. Were it not for this wretched *migraine* I would write you a wild legend of the north in return for your story of the Spanish barber.

XXXII

Thursday, Midnight.

You were *très gentil* to-day, and on my part, believe me, I am *très reconnaissante*. Your fears lest I should take cold were unfounded, and I slept perfectly well, with no tormenting dreams of lonely deserts and an Eastern version of the Venusberg in Tannhäuser, with wastes of sand, a palm tree, and the skeleton of a camel for the *mise en scène*.

After all, how few days in the year, or in a whole life, does a human being really live! We sleep, wake, go through a certain number of duties or so-called pleasures, eat, read, walk, see those who are around us, and then sleep

again, but who in their senses could seriously call that living? Existing if you will, but nothing more. A whole life, and only a few days, at best a few months, of living such as deserves the name, to be gathered out of the long stretch of years. The thought makes me melancholy, so I will say good-night, lest my dreary mood affects you too. On second thoughts I will bid you good morning, for that is the time when this note will reach you, and I would that on opening it you might find a sunshiny *morgengruss*, not gloomy melancholy. The flowers I send are fresh and sweet as I write, and may perhaps keep a tiny perfume for your waking; I bought them at the *marché* of the Madeleine in returning home to-day after our walk.—*Bon jour.* MARIQUITA.

XXXIII

PARIS,

Friday, 10th December.

Do not tempt me. When the 21st of January comes I may, and probably shall, repent in sackcloth and ashes, but on this 10th day of December my mind is firm and unmovable, I cannot, will not, go again to the Musée. The arch tempter is the devil: you can never take second place in anything, therefore if you become a tempter it must be arch tempter, *i.e.* the devil.

My nerves are shaken to their foundation by the most piteous sight I have ever seen. You must have noticed the little Jacques, the merry little black-eyed imp who was always tumbling about the courtyard under everybody's feet. He was the most amusing little scamp I ever met, and the *concierge* and his wife positively adored him ; they have no children of their own, and I believe they picked up this waif one cold winter night on the Boulevard where he had been purposely lost. Well, poor little Jacques strayed beyond the court to-day, and when playing in the street fell under one of the lumbering heavy coal carts, and was carried back a poor wee bit of crushed humanity, the laughing rosy face all white and sharp with pain. But through all his suffering he seemed to have only one thought, how best to cheer the distracted old couple who are the only father and mother the little fellow has ever known. "Do not cry, *petit Papa ; Maman, ne pleure pas.*" This the weak little voice said over and over again with pathetic monotonousness, a pale ghost of a smile on the small drawn features. Even when the fever came and he grew delirious, the boy turned restlessly from side to side with always the same words, "*Ne pleure pas maman, bon petit papa, ne pleure pas.*" Poor little child, there was nothing to do for him, and to-night or to-morrow he must die, merry little Jacques.

Forgive me for not coming again as you

wish, and do not quarrel or say cutting things to me. Little Jacques and the tragedy of his morsel of life have made me sad, and when I am sad "methinks I love you most."

XXXIV

Tuesday, 14th December.

You have a wonderful patience, *mon ami*, and a persistence which ought to carry you far. Still harping on the Musée. If from now until 20th January you dwell upon this one idea, will it not get upon your nerves, and ought you not to keep those same nerves quite calm for the trying ordeal of those thirty-nine visits to the Academicians which to my feeble intellect appear almost as formidable as the Thirty-nine Articles of the Protestant faith?

You say that I know well how to gild the most bitter pill; what if I confess that I find it better for my own peace of mind not to see you, for the flattering (and true) reason that a terrible fear then comes over me that the time may arrive when I shall never see you more? This is a finer gilding than most pills are coated with. If you could but understand that I am very weak where you only think me a coquette.

I have a handkerchief for you, which took my fancy immensely; I wonder if you will like it. Tell me how to send it to you, and pray that I may keep my resolution not to see you.

XXXV

(Letter missing)

XXXVI

(Letter missing)

XXXVII

PARIS,

Monday, December 1842.

Why to-night, of all nights, should a far-away memory of my strange lonely childhood come to me with a vivid distinctness? You will smile at the reminiscence, and smile still more at the weighty importance I attached to it when it was a very real and serious experience to me, but I was a queer child, and it is characteristic. I am afraid I was wofully conceited, and it may be that just such experiences were needed in order to suppress my undue opinion of myself. One cold winter morning I awoke positively bristling with good resolutions. I had been devouring a good many books too highly seasoned with religious views for a small person of my morbid tendencies; I was in a highly-strung state of self-sacrifice, believing with fanatical fierceness that even I could work out my own salvation by prayer

E

and good works, and a strict mortifying of fleshly lusts. I was, in a word, in a frightfully pharisaical frame of mind, believing secretly that I did all these things already, if not quite perfectly, still infinitely better than the children around me, or even some of the grown-up people; believing also that I was on special terms of privileged intimacy with the Almighty, that I understood Him, and He me, a good deal better than most people. Jesus was my friend, the smallest act in my daily life I did for Him, and to please Him. I had been peculiarly lucky for some time past, had won approbation for my quickness at my lessons, and been praised with unusual generosity for various things. My little heart swelled with the true pharisaical complacency, and I felt the delightfully soothing consciousness that I was "not as other men are," only I said children, not men. For some days this exalted state of mind had worked very well, and each night I said longer and longer prayers, positively revelling in the state of holiness to which I had attained, wrestling with God as I imagined Jacob wrestled with the angel, only all my entreaties were for others, for my playmates, my companions at school, my naughty little brothers, that they might finally be brought to know the beauty of holiness, might reach the state of boundless satisfaction and divine peace which I by special grace had already reached,

On the particular winter morning referred to, this glow of godliness was very strong in me, I yearned like the saints of old to be up and doing, to buckle my armour on and to fight the battles of the Lord. Failing actual visible warfare against Satan, I meant to scourge myself, and to chastise the carnal lusts with greater severity than ever. First dressing without a fire, that I might mortify the flesh, blue and shivering I went down and inspected the ready laid breakfast-table. I remembered that an ugly crack disfigured my youngest brother's favourite china mug from which he drank his morning draught of milk. The child himself had not noticed the blemish across the large gilt letters, spelling—"Love the Giver," which was the pride of his baby heart, but I had, and at the time it appeared, congratulated myself that it was in his mug not mine. In the flush of righteousness which filled my heart to bursting, I determined to exchange the cups and give my little brother the whole one. At this very moment he came to the table, and I hastened to make the exchange, before he could see it, for did not the Bible say "Let not your left hand know what the right hand doeth," and had not the full meaning of that sentence been made clear to me? But, alas, neither right nor left hand could be depended on that fateful day. So frozen were my fingers after the fireless room, that I clumsily let the mug fall, and my brother howled with

grief for his hopelessly broken treasure. I was sharply scolded, but bore it meekly for "Jesus' sake," as I kept repeating to my sore little heart, which knew so well my real motive and my innocence. The baby brother refused to kiss me, striking at me in unforgiving anger for destroying the thing he loved the best, and heavy-hearted I went to my lessons, promptly receiving a mark for being late, won because I had stopped to make peace with the child I had unintentionally wronged. Several little friends studied with me and the class in history held one girl so nearly my equal in her love for books that we were called the rivals, but for some time past she had occupied the first place. A question came that day at which she hesitated: if she could not reply to it her place would be mine. It was a terrible moment. I knew the required answer, the coveted honour was within my grasp, but the Bible told me to prefer others before myself, and this girl was my friend. She only needed a hint, one word, and I knew she would remember all that was necessary. Speaking while reciting lessons was strictly forbidden by our governess, but I took out my pocket handkerchief, coughed, and quickly whispered the word which I knew would save my companion. She took advantage of my hint, and remained head of the class; but for me a speedy judgment followed. When accused of having spoken, I dared not lie, so

received two more bad marks to add to the one for unpunctuality ; but worse, far worse than this was the blow dealt me by the friend I had rescued at the cost of my own advancement. She unhesitatingly denied having heard what I had said. This literally staggered me for a moment, and bitterly did I reproach her when later we spoke together, but she was scornful in her denials, and I knew when we parted that our friendship, which had been bound by solemn oaths to endure through eternity, was destroyed. During that entire day the same evil chance followed me. On every side I was misunderstood or reprimanded for things I had not done, until I grew fearful and bewildered. All my self-satisfaction seemed to shrivel up ; the confident reliance I had had upon God melted away, the warm glow which had enveloped me and made me feel so strong had grown chill and feeble, and a sullen despair seemed creeping over me with a resentful sense of injustice. As the early winter evening came on I wandered about the house disconsolately, too proud to confess the soreness of my wounded feelings, too miserable to stay in the warm cheerful nursery where the little brothers were playing. We children had been left to the care of servants, and in the great lonely house the nursery was the one bright spot. Finally, I went to the library where the shutters of the windows were not yet closed, and curled myself up among the

cushions in one of the low wide seats. I can see the little crumpled figure now, with the sore child's heart almost bursting, and the rebellious tears which came hot and fast, dashed away by angry little hands. The room grew darker and the things in it turned to mere shadowy outlines, but the small form in the window-seat sat on looking hopelessly at the frosty stars which blinked and twinkled mockingly.

"Nobody loves me, nobody cares. It's no use trying. I don't believe there is a God, or He would not let people not understand. Why do people hurt me so when I want to be good?"

Poor little angry, doubting, lonely child. I feel sorry for her as I sit here to-night, writing to you; are you sorry for her, or do you not understand?

The hot tears came faster still, and the child let them fall. Presently a cold nose rubbed itself against her hand, and a yellow greyhound jumped up beside her. Passionately she threw her arms around the dog drawing him tightly to her.

"O Zippy, Zippy, love me! Love me back! Don't run away, I love you Zip, love me back, love me back!"

Please be sorry for the little child.

I think I never have loved you as I loved you yesterday.

XXXVIII

PARIS,

New Year's Day 1843.

The very first words that I write in this glad New year of grace must be for you ; but have you welcome large enough for all the love they bring, the wishes that every good on earth may come to you, the prayer that sorrow and pain may never be your portion, the trust that future years may gather only blessings, joy, delight for you, till life shall close, and gentle death shall bring you peace ?

For the letters you send my brother I cannot thank you in writing when I know you to be so near, therefore meet me as usual, and you will find me appreciative of this latest kindness added to so many earlier ones.

They tell me that once an Academician, a man becomes something between a rock and a mummy ; is this true, and shall you turn into this sensitive thing ? Are the following German characters correct ? *Ich liebe dich.*

XXXIX

Wednesday.

Your account of Rachel amused me very much, one can hardly blame her for being annoyed at the absurd interruptions during her recitation. Yes, certainly I will come for the

walk. At two o'clock to-morrow, Thursday. Do pray for fine weather, this sort of thing may be good for fishes, but I hardly swim well enough to enjoy it.—*A demain.*

XL

Friday Evening, 15th January 1843.

You seemed so anxious lest I should suffer from our drenching that I send a line to assure you that I am all right. My cheeks burned so when I came in that my cousin Madame G—— asked if I had fever; I did not tell her the varied excitements we had gone through in order to find a shelter from the tempest, enough I think to account for a dozen fevers! What a rain that was, worse a thousand times than that of a fortnight ago, when I declined to play the part of fish. Why were you sad yesterday? The question has sorely puzzled me since we parted. *Au revoir, au revoir!*

XLI

Saturday.

So tired! Oh so tired am I, that were it not for my promise I would not write; instead I should like to sleep, but happiness I think makes me wakeful. Could I but be sure of such dreams as our meeting of yesterday I would

sleep in spite of happiness, knowing that they would bring so deep a joy that in them I could lull my soul to sweet forgetfulness till we could meet again.

XLII

1.30—*Wednesday,*
January 1843.

The weather is so uncertain that I have decided not to walk, and send this before two o'clock that you may not wait for me. Were you quite just yesterday, or kind? I think you were neither. And because I may or may not do this or that one day and not another, you should not claim the one or the other as a precedent. Unless you promise to remember my conditions, and to keep your own promises, our walks must be discontinued. You would not believe that I seriously meant this when I said it the other day, almost a week ago, but do you not believe it now? You call the walks a pleasure; you tell me they are the greatest happiness you know; yet deliberately you prevent them from being enjoyed, and this by your own perverseness. Is this reasonable?

XLIII

(Letter missing)

XLIV

(Letter missing)

XLV

26th January 1843.

A truce, a truce, a truce! Life is not worth the living at such a price as this. I cry *mea culpa*, so have done; let this unseemly strife between us end, and let us be at peace. So weary am I, so tired, I think I would purchase peace at any price, if death itself must prove the penalty. Come, I have drugged my conscience. We'll look at it together. It lies so still—so still—what is *so* still as a conscience drugged? I seem unable to find a simile strong enough; out of your cleverness, your mocking, cutting rhetoric of speech, your wit, your irony, your cruel, cold sharp cynicism, choose me a fitting phrase to say how still, how stilly quiet a thing a drugged conscience is. I am very weak in words, actions are my forte, and actions they say speak louder than words! So still, so still, so deadly still! My God! I know how still it lies, I have found the simile. The gaunt ghastly skeleton rotting on the sand!!! There it is; the simile, not the skeleton, I write so fast I may not make the words distinct. But you must see it; even in a dream

it was cut so sharp against God's heaven of blue. It never moved so much as a hair's breadth ; the white ghostly thing with the stars looking at it pityingly in the soft south wind. Even the breeze did not move it ; and the sun, burning with a furnace heat, never stirred it, only bleached it drier and drier. Heavens, it was dry enough I trow when I saw it, perhaps now it is whitened dust, blown to the four corners of the earth. Then it could no longer be my simile, for it would move, and movement for a conscience drugged is a foolish contradiction in terms. Well now love me—love me back ! love me back ! I feel like that little crumpled figure that once sat in the window-seat in the dusky gloaming all alone. The poor little angry, doubting, lonely child, whom I told you I was sorry for. She had fought her little fight with such a confident, conceited, pharisaical little ignorant heart, and when the end came it was "Love me back ! Love me back ! I love you." And the little yellow greyhound, poor faithful affectionate dead and buried little Zippy dog, settled warmly down beside her in the chilly dark and licked the angry childish hands which had dashed the tears away, and loved her back again. "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?" The term dog does not seem to be used in quite a flattering sense in this somewhat sarcastic biblical question, but for myself I rather query if the fidelity

of a dog has ever been equalled by a man. What think you? Ask pardon, then love me back, love me back! Love is the only real sunshine, and without sunshine I cannot live. I have a sharp pain in my side, the left; is that where conscience is, or only one's heart?

XLVI

PARIS, 2d February.

Could we not find some new place for our walks? There are too many people one knows in Paris now to make it either safe or amusing to risk meeting them.

XLVII

(Letter missing)

XLVIII

PARIS,

Sunday Morning, 11th February.

Wer besser liebt? Should you ever ask me that question again most unhesitatingly could I give the answer—I love best. But you will not think so when I add that I shall not be able to see you to-day, I am feeling anything but well, and several annoying things prevent

all hope of my being able to enjoy our walk. Further, I cannot name any day or hour just at present when I can promise to come. We must trust to circumstances growing more favourable. With a most unsmiling face do I write all this, for I am disappointed, *mais*—— *que voulez-vous ?* All the world seems going to church ; from my window, as I write, I see men, women, and children coming and going up the wide steps of the Madeleine in an endless ceaseless stream.

There is a place (I will not tell you where, and you are never likely to come across it), but there is one lovely corner of the world, where, could I go to-day, I should feel the better for it. A quiet spot, where prayer is real and faith is not a dream. Imagine a wide, blue lake, stretched out in shimmering beauty ; from its shores rise gently-sloping hills, grass-covered, or thick with foliage in every shade of green, where deep cool shadows lie in dark streaks so restful amidst the flooding sunshine. Far off is one white-capped mountain peak, kissed every morning by the earliest sunbeam and the first pink flush of dawn, and every evening greeted by the latest crimson glow of the purple god as he slowly sinks to rest. Fair islands dot the lake, fairest of all the one I take you to on a quiet summer Sunday. Through a wood, along a narrow winding path with high trees on either side must you go, until a pile of stones sur-

mounted by a cross arrests your eye. The path leads on, and a stillness seems to have fallen on you as you walk, perhaps from the shadow of the cross. Soon, quite straight before you is a wooded grove of white birch trees, tall slim poplars, and young leafy oaks. A space is here, around it rustic seats, and fronting you as you stand, a rocky altar twined with flowers, above this a tall white cross with arms outstretched. Overhead only the deep blue vault of heaven, around the tranquil water of the lake. The place is empty, but slowly one by one the rustic seats fill quietly; those who fill them seeming to be hushed by the same curious stillness which has fallen on you since passing the wayside cross. There is something holy in the silence, and the whisper of the breeze which just stirs the leaves in passing making them glint and flash in the sunlight, seems to fill you with a strangely penetrating sense of calm.

Suddenly, in the distance, comes a faint far sound of voices singing, at first almost unheard, but each moment growing clearer, louder, in the hymn of praise; and presently a strain of music swells the sound, while white-robed choristers wend along the curving path, their fresh young voices mounting up towards heaven, higher and higher, until, as the surpliced band reaches the space before the altar the sound has grown to thrilling gladness. Those quiet ones who fill the rustic seats have joined their voices to the

song, and joyous echoes fill the shadowy wood, floating far across the shining lake. Ah, this is praise indeed in its purest, simplest form. The stillness falls again, one single earnest voice pleading to God above for mercy and forgiveness of sins to erring mortals, being the only one that breaks upon the air. High above the kneeling forms stands the tall white cross, not only as the emblem of that other shameful tree upon which hung the God Man, but with a loving, yearning tenderness all its own. Strangely enough it bends slightly forward, not sufficiently to affright you, lest weighted with all the agony and woe of those for whose sins it once bore the sacrifice, it should fall upon and crush you, but tenderly, wooingly, as though to draw you nearer and enfold you in the stretched-out arms, "mighty to save." Hot waves of feeling sweep over you, strange unbidden tears come to your eyes, the world and scheming noisy life seem immeasurably far off from you in this island chapel by the lake with only God's high, free heaven for a dome. Thoughts which have not been yours for years come crowding quickly, speaking with small still voices. Those you have loved and lost, and perforce have learned to live without, feel nearer to you in that lovely, lonely spot than they ever can in a busy world; some spell draws you close to them with all the old, warm love of long ago. The prayers are over, the glad

praise mounts once more to Heaven, and then, as the choristers wind slowly through the wood again, the sound of singing voices grows fainter and fainter, dying away at last in a distant, deep Amen. The hushed sense of silence comes anew, all is so still.

I saw it once long years ago, the strangely peaceful, lake-side chapel in the wood ; I wish I could show it to you to-day.

But it is not here, not in brilliant Paris ; there is no room for it, no soil on which to plant so plain a cross, and in all the wide, broad streets of Paris not space enough for that narrow curving path leading to the altar, and where the Amen dies away. It is not here, but the old life is, the wicked, old humbugging life of the wicked, old humbugging world, with its iron force of habit, its pleasant, mocking smiles, its thousand cursed doubts and wonderings, its cool, intellectual reasonings, its saturnine humour, its red-blooded passions. *Vive l'amour* is the song sung best in Paris—Love is the god we worship, you and I, the dear god who claims our adoration. And 'tis not a bad worship after all, not for us, for you and for me—in Paris.

It looks like snow. I am wise, I think, to decide against our walk for to-day, but unless I send this letter quickly, it will hardly reach you before the hour when we should have met. I kiss you in my heart, *au revoir*.

XLIX

Sunday Evening, 11th February.

Dear heart, do not cavil at my every word, almost my every thought. I was really ill this morning, and therefore could not walk; really occupied with necessary things (all concerning other people), therefore could not meet you, much as I wished to do so. Yesterday afternoon I too found the weather superb, yet where do you suppose I spent the glorious sunshiny hours? In the Petit St. Thomas, that fearful shop, crushed, crowded, almost suffocated; tormented to buy on the right side and on the left, elbowed by fat women who had breakfasted on onions, *mes pauvres pieds écrasés* by fatter men come to buy cotton night-caps. Altogether it was a pleasant way to spend a perfect afternoon, far pleasanter than merely walking with you in the park at Versailles or under the great trees at St. Germain! My cousin is going away on Thursday, and wanted me to help her with her shopping. Could I say "No, I would rather not, thank you kindly; I have promised to spend just that time with the cleverest, wittiest man in France, he is far more amusing than you"? Be reasonable, at least outwardly. It is the little outward reason that leaves us a few loopholes in this mad world of ours for bits of delicious stolen happiness.

F

What have you for me that I shall think stupid? You must have gone a long way to find that, a stupid thing, when your hands give it.

That very last walk must not be repeated—in detail, *comprenez-vous? en gros, mais pas en détail*. Please remember this.

L

(Letter missing)

LI

16th February.

Oh the lovely pins, how charming of you! The blue shawl I find a trifle gay, but have a brilliant idea as to how it had best be used. I will explain it to you when we meet. My cousin is waiting in the carriage for me; I have not a moment. Oh for a little sunshine, what has happened to the weather? The very first fine day I promise to try my best, for see you soon—I must. I was furious with you the other night at the opera, but to-day I forgive you, *et je vous aime*. Love me back, love me back.

LII

(Letter missing)

LIII

Thursday, February 1843.

Is the Mr. Sharpe whose illness I have just heard of your friend? I once met him in London. Poor man. What a monstrous, threadbare sort of a week I have passed! Shops, shops, shops, until every idea in my head seems turned into lace or ribbon. On Friday or Saturday I hope to be free. Do take care of your poor eye. I am sincerely distressed about it.

LIV

(Letter missing)

LV

(Letter missing)

LVI

27th February 1843.

What can I say to you to help your sad thoughts? You know that you have all my sympathy. Go at once to London if you think you ought to do so, or if it would give you pleasure, or give pleasure to your sick friend.

You may later regret not having done so. I will write to you while you are gone, should you decide to go, then, after that, I think I will write no more, I dare not, I find more courage comes to me in speaking.

LVII

Thursday Morning, 1st March 1843.

Saturday, at the same time and place, weather permitting!

LVIII

(Letter missing)

LIX

(Letter missing)

LX

PARIS, Friday.

If you love the sunshine I adore it! I sympathise with the religion which makes the sun its god, so great is my devotion for it. I know that I am better physically and morally when it shines upon me; it improves my temper and puts me at peace with mankind. But that you love me better in sunshine than at other

times suggests other ideas not so clear to my mind as my own are upon the incalculable value of the sun. No, I do not quite approve of this ; it does not appeal to me with the entire appreciation which most of your ideas excite. I have just read the final sentence of your note again, and more carefully, and find that I was a trifle hasty in my rendering of it. You distinctly say after all, that you love me "*dans tous les temps*," but that the happiness of seeing me is greater happiness when the sun illuminates it. Now the subtilty of this distinction appeals to me delightfully, for does it not prove that sunshine affects you as it does me, giving you more pleasure in all life, even in love? *A la bonne heure*, I like you to think like me, and I try to think with you.

What an inanely stupid letter ! A bread-and-butter miss of sixteen would blush to send it ! But I feel idiotic, rather drunk with sunshine, I have so long been starved without it. Light your cigarette with my silly silly letter, *mon beau soleil*, it is the wisest use you can make of it, if even in that very distant form the word wise can be written near it. Oh *Sonnenschein* ! Oh *Sonnenschein* ! *À mardi*.

P.S.—I forgot to say that I am going to the country.

LXI

Saturday, 19th March 1843.

There are letters and letters, as I suppose there are varying distinctions between fools as a class and philosophers as a class. Having sent you my last epistle in the guise of the most infantile of weak little black and white fools, I will try to-day to despatch my thoughts by an old philosopher gray and hoary with wisdom. Wisdom shall look from his eyes and his wrinkled forehead, in his bushy brows and snowy locks, and shall run down his venerable beard as the oil ran down Aaron's in the Bible story. By the way, when in England did you ever hear that story sung as a sacred anthem? I have, once, but I am not particularly keen about doing so again. The oil ran down his beard, ran down—Aaron—the oil—it ran—his beard ran down—down—down—Aaron—down—the oil, the oil, the oil, down Aaron—down—down—the oil his beard ran down—ran——God knows where it finally did or did not run, or whether it was the oil, or Aaron, or the beard which eventually ran down—down—down—. The only comprehensive impression left upon my mind when the anthem was over was that the beard and Aaron and the oil were going on in such an extraordinary and improper manner and getting so mixed, that I felt

decidedly shy about having anything to do with any of them.

I have written to a friend of mine in London for the rare and valuable book you so much wished for: if any one can procure it he will be able to do so; his own library is one of the best in the country, and he has exceptional chances for picking up literary gems. If he is in town he will answer at once, and will also begin his search for the book without loss of time, but it may be that he is abroad—he frequently goes away at this season. However, my letter is gone, is already posted, and just so soon as I receive his answer I will send it to you. Let us hope that it may be favourable in every way. You need not be uneasy lest my asking for the book may cause astonishment. My book-worm friend is accustomed to my eccentricities, and will not give the request a second thought—not in the way you fear. As for the price, if you propose paying such a sum as that I can only say, “Rather you than me!” “Me” would very strongly object, although as a rule I consider money spent in books as well invested.

Why oh why are you so sad? In almost every letter you tell me that you are *triste*; do you think it makes me gay to hear it? What can I do for you, what say to you, in what words write to you, in order to cure you of this mortal melancholy? I try each mood

in turn, grave and gay, silly and serious ; I rack my brain for stories to make you laugh, for something to bring a smile to your grave lips, because always in my ear are ringing the words you write so often—*triste, très triste, bien triste*. How can I cheer your sadness ? Only tell me, and you shall be *triste* no more. Will it please you to hear that for Monday, the whole of Monday, a long long happy Monday, I can be yours ? I shall be free for the entire day, and will use my freedom in making myself your captive, “An it please you, my lord.” Does it please you, will you order sunshine, and a gentle western breeze, and a happiness which nothing can disturb, and a great great love for me, and a cheerful salon and cosy little *déjeuner à la fourchette* at the Pavillon Henri Quatre, near the great trees at St. Germain where Louise de la Vallière loved the king, and where the magnificent Louis XIV loved Louise ? Will you order all this and have it ready for Monday, blessed Monday the 21st day of March in the year of grace 1843 ?

Now have I not kept my promise and sent you a letter freighted with wisdom, for do I not know that the wisdom you like best in me, and find the wisest, is the folly of love ? Ah yes, I know, and I love you for your wise folly, as you love me in return for my foolish wisdom.

LXII

Monday Evening, 21st March 1843.

Once upon a time there was a little girl called Mary who had a friend named Grace. The friend was older than Mary, and in the child's affection for her was mingled a little fear and not a little humbleness. One day Mary's mother said to her, "If you are very good for a whole week, study your lessons well, and are careful with your copy, and neither make a noise nor ask tiresome questions, you shall go and spend Saturday with Aunt Marion at Clover Patch, if the weather is quite fair, and take Gracie with you."

This announcement to the child meant just bliss, absolute bliss, nothing more and nothing less. Aunt Marion was the dearest, kindest old maid aunt in the world ; Clover Patch was the dearest old house in existence, and had the most beautiful gardens and clover fields, filled with fruit and flowers. Oh how weary long the week seemed to little Mary. She studied her lessons until her little brain was dizzy, and wrote out her copy over and over again, very careful to make big round letters, but afraid to ask what the words meant because mother might call it a tiresome question.

NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN.

It looked very much like a lie, and Mary

hardly liked to write it over so often. Her doll was new, with its pretty pink cheeks and round little body, so new that Mary was afraid to take it to Clover Patch with her, much as she wanted to show it to Aunt Marion. You see the paint had not rubbed off yet, and no holes had been stuck in the body, so Mary could not know that it was stuffed with sawdust. Several things she could think of were new, but she would not run any risk, so held her peace. Every night she prayed with a beautiful faith that it might be "quite fair weather" on Saturday, and she was painfully quiet that no sound of hers might imperil the success of the trip to Clover Patch. The day came, warm and bright; Grace was sweet and gracious; Aunt Marion her dear old self; fruit, flowers, fresh country milk, everything was delicious. The children played in the new-mown hay, gathered buttercups, and shouted with delight when the little round gold spot was reflected in their dimpled chins, tossed cowslip balls and twined daisy chains, fed the downy yellow chickens, and gazed entranced at the new litter of pigs, the funny round pinky white and black things with sweet little curled-up tails. A very long, long happy day at Clover Patch was bliss indeed. But the children grew tired at last, and a little cross, and almost before they knew it an awful ending had come to their happiness. Clouds were coming up

quickly, and Mary grew frightened—she was terribly afraid of a thunderstorm. Grace was not at all sympathetic, but a good deal superior to her younger friend, and she only laughed at little Mary's troubled face. "Oh, Gracie, let us go into the house quickly, it is getting so dark."

"I did not know you were a coward."

"Oh, I'm not a coward, but look, quick, oh, there's the thunder."

"Well, if you're not a coward, stay here."

"But oh, Gracie—the lightning, please come in."

"Now you are going to cry. I wouldn't be a coward and a cry-baby both."

The words were bad enough, they made Mary's little heart swell with indignation, but the laugh—the heartless mocking laugh so hard and scornful with the cruel scorn of childhood—was more than little Mary's heart could bear. She clenched her fist tight with sudden passion, her small face was very white.

"And now you are a little spitfire," Grace said suddenly, before her companion had time to speak.

"And you—you are a liar, and liars go to hell, and the devil burns them!"

The words almost choked her, but she had said them, those awful words which made her tremble when mother told her about them on Sunday nights. And said them to Grace, her

friend that she loved. Oh what an ending to the blissful summer day!

Do you believe in a soul? Is it an embryo, a spiritual essence, a germ? Shall everything that we have now, all that we are, all the fears and loves and hatreds that we feel in the flesh, fall away and leave us only a seed, and shall one seed know another seed for the old love it loved on earth when both are changed and glorified? Or does it go and dwell in a star, this spirit which they say wings its flight above and is not buried in the ground with the poor body it has lived with always but which it leaves behind to worms? And do the stars recognise each other?

Some wise ones tell us we shall meet again and be the same; same hands, same feet, a mouth to eat and kiss, "raised incorruptible"—that is the phrase. In which do you believe? Tell me.

My heart and I are very tired to-night, we have puzzled so long over old things and new. But there is nothing new, nothing absolutely new can be, because the days of miracles are over, and although the world still has its full complement of fools, they are nineteenth century fools who do not believe in miracles. It is, however, given to some silvery tongues to tell old truths so cunningly, and to turn their old dyed garments so cleverly, that even the fools are taken in. It strikes me that we grow a

little too analytical and metaphysical to be quite amusing. Good-night.

LXIII

Saturday, 10 A.M., 30th March.

It must be for Monday from two to five, to-day I cannot possibly leave.

LXIV

Friday Morning, 8th April.

Only a short time since I wrote to you that the time of miracles was past, and lo, one has happened! Is that a proper term to apply to a miracle? I am unaccustomed to such things. Do they happen, or take place, or merely exist? they are certainly puzzling. On Monday, for to-morrow I cannot come, I will explain the miracle, and you shall tell me how to understand it. Now do remember this; so often when we meet we quite forget, at least I do, the things I mean to tell you, for instance, you never said whether you liked my little essay on *Wilhelm Meister*, and I wrote it more for your opinion than for anything else. Do not spoil the coming Monday as you did the last, it really is too stupid for us to quarrel as we do, even the "making up" does not really make up for what we each time lose and suffer. When I

am gone you will regret it all, and I probably shall regret it still more. Let us be more sensible.

LXV

PARIS, *Tuesday, 12th April.*

Ah, that was a happy day, with no drawback, if only your poor eyes did not suffer from that wretched *courant d'air*. I scarcely dare write lest some word or phrase of mine may spoil the "afterglow," which I know cannot last long, but which I would hold undisturbed in its perfect beauty until the last tint steals away; even then it will always have a dear corner in my memory, a place to itself in my gallery of mind pictures, a little quiet place where the brilliancy of the other paintings will not clash or be too strong for the soft tones and dreamy tenderness of this.

At dinner last night some one spoke of Catullus and his works, but I did not own to having read them. A discussion arose as to the precise date at which women's influence in the world began, and the various opinions amused me. Tell me yours.

LXVI

PARIS, *2d May.*

I wore the ivy in my hair to-night when I dined with the Comtesse de B——, going after-

wards to see the *feu d'artifice*. It suddenly struck me in the middle of dinner that they might compare me to a ruin in consequence of my decorations, and I was quite uncomfortable ; it would be exactly like M. N——, who was present, to do this. Here is a little comparison for you, a little conundrum for you to find an answer to by the time we meet, or if you are very industrious you may discover it before that and write me the answer.

LXVII

(Letter missing)

LXVIII

PARIS, 13th June 1843.

I think I cannot bear it much longer, this incessant quarrelling when we meet, and your unkindness during the short time that you are with me. Why not let it all end ? it would be better for both of us. I do not love you less when I write these words ; if you could know the sadness which they echo in my heart you would believe this. No, I think I love you more, but I cannot understand you. As you have often said, our natures must be very different, entirely different ; if so, what is this curious bond between them ? To me you seem

possessed with some strange restlessness and morbid melancholy which utterly spoils your life, and in return you never see me without overwhelming me with reproaches, if not for one thing, for another. I tell you I cannot, will not, bear it longer. If you love me, then in God's name cease tormenting me as well as yourself with these wretched doubts and questionings and complaints. I have been ill, seriously ill, and there is nothing to account for my illness save the misery of this apparently hopeless state of things existing between us. You have made me weep bitter tears of alternate self-reproach and indignation, and finally of complete miserable bewilderment as to this unhappy condition of affairs. Believe me, tears like these are not good to mingle with love, they are too bitter, too scorching, they blister love's wings and fall too heavily on love's heart. I feel worn out with a dreary sort of hopelessness ; if you know a cure for pain like this send it to me quickly.

LXIX

PARIS, *Saturday, 6 P.M., 23d June.*

One line before I have to dress for a large dinner at Madame de G——'s. Although I said good-bye to you less than an hour ago, I

cannot refrain from writing to tell you that a happy calm which seems to penetrate my whole being seems also to have wiped out all remembrance of the misery and unhappiness which has overwhelmed me lately. Why cannot it always be so, or would life perhaps be then too blessed, too wholly happy for it to be life? I know that you are free to-night, will you not write to me, that the first words my eyes fall upon to-morrow shall prove that to-day has not been a dream? Yes, write to me. I have not taken cold.

LXX

8th July.

Let me dream—Let me dream.

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LXXI

PARIS, 25th July.

When I remember how short the time now is before you must leave and all our happy days be over, I can scarce write for the grief that comes over me. In losing you I shall lose my other better self, and must wander on as aimlessly as those tortured ones in Dante's hell, who have lost their mates and can know peace never again. Will you think of me when you

G

have gone, think kindly and never bitterly? If I have hurt you I have hurt myself far more, so let that make amends.

I must soon decide where my summer is to be spent ; all my plans have been in abeyance lately, it was so fair to dream and idly drift from day to day without any fixed plan or purpose. But all dreaming must, I suppose, one day end. And the end should be good, peaceful, and *convenable*. Before all things, no regrets, or reproaches, or vain looking back ; no futile wishing that things had been other than they were and are. So to part were well, perhaps better than to dream on indefinitely. When a break comes naturally and calmly, a journey, a friendly parting, is it not wiser to accept quietly this solution, to go our several ways in life in peaceable commonplace fashion, rather than to wait for an end which may be tragic, or worse still, a wretched, played-out comedy? Think of this, my friend, and tell me the result of your thoughts.

LXXII

Thursday, 28th July.

Your letter received last evening was no answer to mine of the 25th. Will you not write? I wished to speak to you on Monday, but could not,

LXXIII

PARIS,

Thursday Evening, 2d August 1843.

It was an odd interview ; I am not quite sure to-night whether I am myself, or some one else, you will probably suggest that I am neither, only a statue made of a material a trifle colder than marble. In truth, you would not be far wrong this time, for I feel frozen ; not externally, I took no cold and hope you did not, but all my ideas seem congealed. You are writing to me, I know, perhaps at this very moment. What will you say, I wonder, how will you speak of our curious interview? I think I know what one part of your letter will be, one idea that in some form or other you will suggest. It is this, that we put away the past, and begin anew. You will express it more poetically, in choicer language, but that will be the sense underlying your words, at least I think so. I shall be very curious to see if I have judged rightly.

LXXIV

4th August 1843.

Yes, it was a good "recommencement," whether absolutely wise or not is another question which we had better not discuss. But

I was very happy, happy for one long golden afternoon, and that at least is something, no small thing either to save and hold and keep as fact and memory. Adieu, *et au revoir*.

LXXV

PARIS, 6th August.

I cannot let you go without one line, although it may be the last I write, for your words wounded me too cruelly yesterday easily to forget them. They cannot, however, prevent my wishing you *bon voyage*.

LXXVI

(Letter missing)

LXXVII

VERSAILLES,

11th August 1843.

The whole morning has been spent by me under our favourite trees trying by force of reading German to make the long hours pass more quickly. They are *very* long these hours passed without you. The weather is lovely, that at least is one satisfactory bit in the generally muddled state of my affairs. I can walk all day if I like, and be troubled neither by

undue heat nor rain. Very few people are here ; the two pretty children of Lady C—— have been left in charge of their nurse while her ladyship disports herself and her toilettes at Trouville ; old M. de L—— still pursues his researches in the gallery for his *Notes on Painting* (what an awful book it will be when finished !) ; and an American family, who afford me much amusement, are about the only humans I see. This Transatlantic party are delicious, each one perfect in his or her particular way. They have actually crossed that terrible Atlantic Ocean, and made a journey that would stagger most people, for the purpose of educating and marrying their daughter in foreign lands. I must begin my description with the daughter—she is so much the most important member. She is lovely—a charming figure, complexion like smooth young rose leaves, wavy brown hair, good eyes, and teeth quite perfect. But her voice, *Mon Dieu !* her voice ! Do they never teach their children to modulate their voices in that country ? It is something quite too awful. This girl comes into the *salle à manger* dressed delightfully, a trifle much, and with diamonds in her ears that in England would be worn at a Court ball ; but she is so pretty that she almost produces the effect of a picture, so the dressing, even in its inappropriateness, would not matter so much if only she would remain a picture and not open her lips.

But that shrill, unmusical voice, high over every other sound in the room, is quite terrible. No matter who is talking, even the rest of her own party, she still screams on like a pretty young peacock until one's ears tingle. The plump mamma, wearing more diamonds, does not seem to mind this in the least, or in fact anything else which her daughter does or does not do. She is quite placid under all circumstances, and plainly shows that she is a generation behind the girl in education and culture. The papa is going to encounter the Atlantic again, and be absent from his family for months, that he may make more dollars for his family to spend, and be able to send supplies for the trousseau of Mademoiselle, for the pretty daughter is engaged, the *fiancé* being no less a personage than little Prince P——, that small *attaché* of the Sardinian Legation in London whom I always thought the most forlorn, moth-eaten human specimen I ever met. He is *criblé de dettes*, and they say scrofulous, but his *couronne fermée*, like charity, covers a multitude of sins. They gladly pay his debts, these good democratic Americans, with their hardly-earned dollars, and still more gladly bestow upon him their sweet young daughter, blooming with health and beauty. The sight of it all is rather disgusting; one is apt to hope better things from a new country claiming to be free from old-world follies.

The owl's feather came safely, but was not needed for the purpose you mention. Even without it under my pillow as a dream talisman, my sleeping as well as waking thoughts are seldom given to any one but yourself. Hardly a safe employment for them, I know, and each day I tell myself that the time has come to seek something else as mental food, while evening returns only to find the old thoughts occupied as usual. Adieu! I await your letters with impatience.

LXXVIII

(Letter missing)

LXXIX

September 1843.

Ah, why did we meet again! Why disturb a memory grown calm and peaceful by an actuality gloomy, stormy, mutually reproachful! What is this strange, tormenting, mysterious affinity which seems to bind us together when reason, simple common sense even, so plainly says that there is something so radically different in our natures that union of spirit is a simple impossibility? This sort of thing, this meeting and fruitless regretting, is silly childishness, it has not even the dignity of madness to

excuse it. Come, in common sense, let us end the whole matter. You are leaving Paris almost immediately ; good, then do not let us meet again ! I will wish you *bon voyage* as a friend. We will write to each other sometimes, forget each other gradually, and all is said. This is the only sensible thing we can do ; let us be sensible, and let this be the end.

LXXX

PARIS, *September.*

I am glad that you did not accept my letter and its suggestions as final, I am glad that we did meet before you left, and that we were sensible enough to part friends—the best and dearest of friends. After all that we have been to each other, any other course than this would, I think, hardly have proved us to possess much spirit, to say nothing of plain common sense.

To-morrow I leave Paris and go to Hannover for a time to revisit my old haunts, but how long I shall remain I do not yet know. I send this to Avignon, and shall hope for a long letter from there. Send me some architectural sketches ; you must remember our discussion about them.

LXXXI

HANNOVER,

29th September 1843.

Me voici once more in the old familiar German town where long ago I struggled with the terrible German language. I never told you, I think, of my first winter here, but it was amusing enough, or rather it is amusing to look back upon; at the time there were decided drawbacks to merriment. My guardian was not sorry when I petitioned to be sent to Germany in order to learn the language on the spot (for well I knew that any attempt on my part to learn it elsewhere would be a conspicuous failure!), and he promptly packed me off under charge of some old ladies travelling in this direction. I was deposited like a parcel—"this side up with care," and "fragile," marked in the corners. My new abode was the sunny little room looking out upon the Georg Strasse, where, for the sake of old associations, I am to-day writing to you. Remember at that time I was innocent of the smallest knowledge of the language which more than once lately I have employed to tell you of the state of my affections. *Ich liebe dich* meant nothing to me then; I could not have said it or written it had the refusal to do so been extermination. Frau Finanzrätthin Muthmann was the unpro-

nounceable title I was told to give the fat, shapeless woman who was lady of the house, and who, to add to her slender widow's income, consented to take young women like myself anxious to learn the language of the Fatherland. Glibly enough can I say her name now, but then it was not so easy. There were two daughters—a pretty blue-eyed Fräulein Marie, about twenty, and a child with long fair braids of wonderful hair in a marvellous state of tidiness, and one son, a lout called Heinrich. The name has always been odious to me since, for its owner fell in love with me, and my first experience of German beer and German *Schwärmerei* combined did not capture my fancy. He was always drinking beer, that odious Heinrich, even when indulging in the wildest metaphors to express his passion for myself. Had I engaged an apartment in the Tower of Babel during its building I should have been equally enlightened in regard to what was going on around me as I was for the first week or so in this little German household to which I must not forget to add one other pupil, but one who was so far advanced in German that she scorned any other tongue; and a cousin of Fräulein Marie—a tall Prussian officer who I am convinced kept his ramrod down his back when it was not needed for active service. Never shall I forget how I disgraced myself the first time this gallant soldier appeared upon

the scene. I had never seen the military social salute—the heels clicked sharply together; the quick downward jerk of the head, and instant raising of it again as though a snap-hinge united the skull of the magnificent animal to his spine; the spasmodic motion from one person to another, for to each in turn must the whole performance be strictly gone through with, from the first stiff taking of position to the very end of the hinge movement. Oh how I laughed and almost suffocated in my vain efforts to prevent the entire company from knowing what so convulsed me! Later we became very good friends—the Herr Lieutenant and I; he did not *schwärm* for me as much as Heinrich did, and in consequence I found him more agreeable. It was a pleasant life enough; I worked hard at mastering the language, and enjoyed the walks to beautiful Herrenhausen, and the afternoon concerts under the trees, and the early evenings at theatre or opera. We had seats in the Fremden *loge* near the stage for the better hearing of the German words, and the first tenor, from whom three times a week I took singing lessons, made eyes at me in the sentimental parts of his *rôle*. It was a new sensation to be made love to so very publicly and yet with no one understanding but myself, and I found it quite romantic. Yes, it was a decidedly pleasant life, even the *Wurst* tasted good, and I learned to drink my

little *flasche* of Tivoli beer quite comfortably before going to bed on theatre nights. We were all tucked up and asleep about ten o'clock, the plays beginning there before six, and not having you to dream about in those early days I slept soundly, and was all ready for the day's work when I awoke. A simple, pleasant life, and I like to recall it as I sit in my old room to-day and feel myself so changed.

I liked your description of Avignon. The palace of the Popes I remember well, and a little shrine on the old bridge struck me as so pretty and picturesque that I made a sketch of it which I still have. I saw a good deal, I think, in those few months when I was abroad, but I long to see more, that is the worst of travelling; the cry is always more, more, and one is never satisfied.

Write to me of all your wanderings; I can read as many pages as you will send, and not tire of so doing. Adieu.

LXXXII

(Letter missing)

LXXXIII

PARIS, 13th November 1843.

Arrived here last evening. To see you again—can it be possible! I shall be free all day to-morrow.

LXXXIV

(Letter missing)

LXXXV

PARIS, 13th December.

We are absolute fools, no other word will do. To part friends, to write each to other as friends, to have reached a wise calm phase of existence, to count upon meeting again as friends with all save happy memories of the past blotted out, and to make an absurd *fiasco* of everything as we did to-day! The contempt I feel for myself passes words, and not to put it more strongly, my respect for you is decidedly less. I write no more after signing myself, as I now do for the last time, M.

LXXXVI

(Letter missing)

LXXXVII

Friday, 14th January 1844.

No, you received no letter from me on Tuesday, for the simple reason that I did not

write one, nor did I this year send you a New Year Greeting as I did last. If you have kept my letters—a foolish thing to do by the way—read that one of last New Year's Day over again ; if I remember rightly it contains sufficient tenderness to content a man for a long time. I am rather ill, and have been taking care of my aunt, who is with me, and who is more ill still. This must be my excuse for a short and absolutely uninteresting letter, a thing of ink and paper not deserving the name of letter, but all that I propose sending you, therefore you must, I fear, make the best you can of it.

If you have time for such trivialities make me a sketch of our woods.

LXXXVIII

(Letter missing)

LXXXIX

PARIS, *Sunday, 11th March.*

After all, I find that it will be absolutely impossible for me to meet you to-morrow. I am sorry, but I really cannot arrange the walk, *à bientôt.*

XC

Thursday Morning, 15th March.

I am so excited I can hardly wait to hear the result. Of course you will be elected, of that there can be no doubt. When I next see you you will be enrolled among the Immortals, and I shall have a grave Academician all for myself! *Dieu vous garde.*

XCI

Friday, 16th March 1844.

Laugh at me if you will, but I could not help it, I cried when it was all over and you were really nominated! I know it was the acme of silliness, but I had worked myself up to a tremendous pitch of excitement; I do not think I could have stood your losing the nomination, for in spite of all you say I feel sure that in your heart you cared about it. You must be so busy I will not take up a moment longer of your time, only send warmest congratulations, best wishes, love. *Adieu, mon vénérable!*

XCII

(Letter missing)

XCIII

Of course I saw what you sent me "*en pleine Académie*," and naturally my first impulse was to screen myself behind the friendly hat of my next neighbour, in blank terror lest she and all the world beside should see it too, and know that it was meant for me! How could you do such a dangerous and compromising thing? and how sweet of you to think of me at such a moment and to do it!

Your speech did not seem in the least too long, and I enjoyed it immensely. But I will write no more; we are to meet soon, in less than an hour now, and I can say all the much that still remains to be said in person. Had I known it was so late I should not have written, this will hardly reach you before it is time for you to come for me. *A vous de cœur.*

XCIV

PARIS, 27th April 1844.

Your last letter was so humble, you yourself so lamblike and mild during our last walk, that the soft and unusual glow of your complaisance still floats around me like a halo. My friends do not know me in this effulgent, radiant state, and I assure you my success at dinners

and balls is something quite phenomenal. Does this announcement enrage you, or are you still like the tenderest morsel of spring mutton? As I passed the butchers' shops to-day and saw paper roses pinned on their prize sheep, I was strongly tempted to stop and buy some to send to you at Strasburg.

I am just so happy that it is a pleasure merely to live. Nothing particular has happened to produce this exaggerated state of feeling, but it is in the sweet "youngness" of the year, the tenderness of the first spring foliage, the tiny little leaves uncurling so gently, the life in the balmy air like a pure wine exhilarating but not grossly intoxicating, the butterfly children with innocent eyes toddling along the Champs Elysées, the sky all dotted with fleecy rainbow-tinted clouds, studding the heavens with sapphires and opals which flash in the mellow sunshine. Only to live on such a day as this is pure happiness, but to live with the knowledge that another heart beats with you and for you, another warm, living, loving human being thinks of and cares for you, ah, *voilà* happiness doubled and intensified. Can you wonder that I am gay when I feel and know all this, and when I am in this loveliest city by the Seine, this brilliant flashing Paris? Come back to me here, and I promise that our thread of life shall be taken up again where it was dropped, as though no break or pause of any kind had come in the weaving of

H

it. Come back to me, but quickly, while the sunshine lasts.

XCV

PARIS,

Tuesday, 30th July.

How long it is since I have written to you, but meeting every day was better, was it not? better than the best of letters. Now I suppose that little interlude is over, and that we both must "to life again," an outside, other people's life, a noisy, bustling, ordinary life. Well, dreaming for ever would, I suppose, end in softening of the brain, and we still have heads, although for so long now hearts have been trumps. I feel that I must make an effort, and seriously pull myself together, must go away somewhere and show the world, my portion of it at least, that I still do live, and am tolerably sane. How much longer shall you be in Paris? I ought to go to the country almost immediately, but I promise to see you again first.

XCVI

PARIS, 18th August.

You see I am still here in spite of your sarcastic suggestion the other day, that it was quite possible for me to take "French leave."

Let me know to-morrow the date when you must leave Paris, that I may make my arrangements accordingly.

XCVII

(Letter missing)

XCVIII

PARIS,

5th September 1844.

After changing all my plans and remaining on here simply for the pleasure of seeing you again, I find our interview of the day before yesterday, and your letter of Monday 3d, just punishment for the *bêtise* I have evidently committed in doing so. You bid me an eternal adieu, "*pendant que vous avez du courage.*" *Merçi.* You suggest that we can love each other only at a distance, that perhaps when we have both reached a comfortable old age we may meet again with pleasure, but that while waiting for this millennium you beg I will in both happiness and unhappiness remember you. You also say that no anger remains with you, only a great sadness. You still further add (and the sentence makes me think you must be dying) that you hope now I will pardon you.

For a lately nominated Academician the

composition as a whole of this most extraordinary letter strikes me as a trifle weak, if you do not mind my saying so. As an example of French style it may be all right, but in crude English it produces upon my mind the idea of a mental feebleness which is simply incredible, when I remember who it is that writes it. Have you already softening of the brain? I feared it in my own case, should our idle dreaming be indefinitely prolonged, but I did not seriously anticipate it as the end of your career.

Wake up, take a tonic, cut your finger, do anything to regain your scattered senses, and meet me at two o'clock to-morrow, Thursday, 6th September; if you do not do this it will indeed be adieu with a vengeance.

XCIX

(Letter missing)

C

(Letter missing)

CI

D—,

14th September 1844.

From Poitiers you write me that my last letter reached you, but you make no sort of

allusion to two previous ones in which were one or two questions which, if you remember, I also asked you at our last meeting in Paris, when after all we did not have that final tragic parting, did not say that eternal adieu, which you were to express while you still had *du courage*! Oh, how infantile we are to quarrel as we do, kiss and make friends, and go on writing as calmly as possible after our little tempests in a teapot. You have a way of not answering questions which is very reprehensible, but it is no use for me to waste time in repeating them, for they were rather frivolous, and anything less frivolous than I feel to-day could hardly be imagined.

There is a man here who interests me strangely, a man who is in great mental trouble, and whom I have met in a most extraordinary way. I do not yet quite understand how it came about; how a clergyman of the Church of England should take me of all people into his confidence; how he ever came to tell me of his doubts and his terrible experience. It was one of those strange confessions which are some times made by the most reticent men to the most unlikely of listeners. A mutual friend mentioned his name to me one day as we all stood at the hotel door together, he merely bowed, and a moment later moved away, and I did not give him a second thought. The following afternoon late, I found myself far

away from our inn, and a sudden mountain storm came up before I could find shelter of any kind. It was not only an unpleasant but a dangerous position, for the lightning plays odd tricks in these wild rocky districts, and is no respecter of persons. I confess to having been a good deal frightened, and as I looked helplessly about the sight of the tall Anglican priest I had met the day before was a very welcome one, he was at least a human being and a man, and might know of some hut where we could find temporary safety. As it happened he did, and for more than an hour we were together in an empty cabin on the hillside, used by the goat-herds in the summer-time. The storm increased, and the danger of it was very evident. How it came about, I repeat, I do not know, but the conversation turned upon fear, trust in God, and faith. Shall I ever forget that man's stricken, haggard face as he told me his story! Told me, while the lightning played about us in forked tongues of flame, of his simple, childlike, unquestioning belief in God and Christ, in angels and in an old-fashioned cloven-footed devil. How he had preached the word, and taught plain Christian Bible truths such as he himself had learned at his mother's knee. How, little by little, doubts came, questionings arose, faith became clouded, how the wonderful story of Christianity which he had reverently received, and in which he had rever-

ently instructed others, took gradually but surely the hues of a lovely fairy tale, which man's intellect could only smile at, not seriously accept. How the trouble grew greater and books and study only made it worse, until in order to remain an honest man he had fled from church and people, taking his nominal holiday for a season, knowing well in his heart that it was a farewell for all time. As the storm increased the man's excitement grew; I think he forgot that I was there, and talked only to himself or the spirits he recognised in the storm shrieks. Oh, it was awful, the great agony of a soul in doubt. Never can I forget the unutterable horror of it. The tortured pain, the seething agony, the writhing despair of that human soul! It was an infinity of anguish compared to which the physical crushing of bone or rending of flesh or muscle can be nothing. It was sport for devils, rare mirth for the arch-fiend himself bored with the puny impotence of man in fashioning evil. Rich rare sport for the old pagan to watch a nineteenth-century conscience so saturated with intellectual culture that it had thrown old beliefs to the winds, and denied as fables God and Satan equally. To be doubted must convulse the power of evil with devilish delight, and I can fancy him evolving out of his own inner devil's-doubted consciousness a rare refinement of revenge for the presumption of this

clarified nineteenth-century intellect, even while the anguished soul told of his doubts and of the peace gone from him for ever. The storm cleared slightly, and the lightning ceased. The man before me was still looking out over the mountains with wide unseeing eyes, unconscious, I was convinced, that any one was near him. I hated to leave him alone with his great agony, yet I dreaded more to have him come out of that odd trance-like state, and perhaps remember that he had spoken words before a stranger which he would rather have died than uttered. So very quietly I stole away and left him alone with his tortured soul. It was the kindest thing that I could do. He did not appear at dinner that night, and the next morning very early he was gone.

No, I do not feel frivolous to-day. At this moment I question whether I shall ever feel so again.

This story will not appeal to you, and I much wonder why I tell it, unless it is that the habit of writing to you all that happens in my life has grown upon me. You need not give me your views of the incident or refer to it. I know beforehand all that you can say, it will only be a repetition of your former words, "Do you believe in the devil? The whole question lies in this. If he alarms you, provide against his carrying you off," and so on to the end of the chapter.

Think no more of my story.

The forests here are like old friends, because they remind me of those near Paris, and of our walks together in them. When shall we meet there? when do you return? I wish that you were here to-day, I would gladly forget in your wit, and your mockery of all things serious, the solemnness of that man's soul-torture, but I said we were to allude to that no more. I could love you to-day as madly as you, even you, could wish, why are you not here? You would no longer jeer at me for being a marble statue, formal, cold, forbidding; it would be the old cry over again only more intensified—"I love you! Love me back!" To-night I hunger and thirst for you, I love you with every fibre of my being, madly, unfearingly, with a passionate recklessness I have never felt before! Ah, thank God that you are not here!

CII

D—, 11th November.

I have been able to get out of the trip to the Italian Lakes, therefore shall be in Paris about the first week in December. *Sempre a te.*

CIII

PARIS, 4th December 1844.

There is such a passion of antagonism in my soul to-day that I know well the last thing I should do is to write, yet I do write. I was very angry with you when we parted. You are *entêté* to a degree absolutely absurd, and with it all you are very "hard." Do you not know this? can you not yourself feel it, without my being forced to tell you? I have been *très souffrante*, and I know that I am irritable to a degree. Everything seems going wrong, and the edges of my life are surely more frayed and ragged than they have any right to be; more wofully uneven than the edges of any one else's life. Why cannot we have things when the longing for them is upon us? Before we eat our hearts out with aching vain desire? Before all the gilt is worn off the gingerbread and the cake itself has grown stale and musty? Why not! oh why not! You may think me ungrateful to write this, when one thing is mine which I should prize, and I do prize above all others, and when one infinite happiness has come to me in that we have met again. And you will be fairly right. I am ungrateful, and as I said before, am to-day frightfully antagonistic towards men and things. Why is it, I wonder, that women often wish to be men, but no

mortal ear has yet listened to the longing from a masculine heart to be a woman? The Jews carry the idea further still; in the service of their synagogues the males chant in sententious self-satisfaction, standing the while in the main body of the building, "God, I thank Thee that Thou hast not made me a woman." Above, in the gallery regions, to which the females have been banished, comes the response in much more humble tones—"God, I thank Thee that Thou hast made me according to Thy will." To-day I am not humble, I cannot echo any such self-abasing sentiment, I would be *anything*, I think rather than what I am. The flowers of life have poisoned petals, their perfume is stifling, not exhilarating. *Bref*, I have blue devils badly, so will write no more.

CIV

PARIS, *Thursday, 7th February.*

Let me hear how the reception at the Academy goes off, that is, if you have time to send me a line.

CV

Thursday Evening, 7th February.

My warmest congratulations. *Vous voici* a full-fledged Academician. I was present at

your reception, but did not tell you beforehand that I was going as you had said you would be nervous if you fancied any of your friends to be looking on. But it went off charmingly ; of what had you been afraid ? And now for a good long walk with the seven-league boots. What hour will suit you best ?

CVI

D—, 15th August 1845.

I am only just settled here, having got through my wanderings in Germany with Madame de C—— very much later than I expected to. The old haunts are pleasantly familiar ; I am quite glad to find myself amongst them once more.

What is it within us that so quickly responds to a real touch of the pathetic ? We read a book, not particularly well written, perhaps rather the reverse, and eminently stupid. One sentence, one small line which comes unexpectedly in the middle of a page, touches us to quick sympathy, hot tears come to our eyes, and an odd wedge is in our throats. And it is even more marked in real life, this prompt response to pathos. I cried like a baby this afternoon. A peasant girl in whom I took a good deal of interest last summer married a low quarrelsome brute who between drink and

temper has made her life a misery, and more than once nearly murdered her in his fits of drunken fury. Now he has done it quite, killed her as surely as Cain killed Abel, but she by a loving lie persisted in saving him from a righteously deserved death by the guillotine. I went to see the poor thing this afternoon, all that was left of her, for she was nothing but a broken up mass of bones. "I fell from the hay-loft, madame, it was so high no one could fall from there and not be crushed, but I do not mind dying, François is so good to me." Until the very end the poor pretty thing kept repeating this pitiful lie which was to save her husband, and she finally died with it upon her lips. Has she been saved or damned by it? Who will dare to say?

Life and its problems are too intricate for me; of one thing only do I seem to be quite quite sure, I love you.

CVII

PARIS, 3d September 1845.

In the soft September dark I have been sitting thinking of you, and of our speedy meeting. Two of my friends here are ill, and I have promised not to go over to England without them. The fear expressed in your last letter, therefore, is for the present at least un-

founded ; Lady M—— will not just yet have the chance of expounding her theories as to “the baseness of being in love,” and I individually cannot become either more or less English than I already am from contact with *les Anglais*. Whether I can remain here until the 20th, the date you mention as a probable one for your return, is a question. I will do my best, of that you may rest assured. Do take care of yourself and do not work too hard. It is all very well to accomplish what you undertake, but there are bounds to all things, and I fear you are rather apt to overdo it. For myself, I am splendidly well and the weather is perfect. If only you were here, what walks, what talks, we might have. Do make a speedy end of all your tiresome old *députés* and come back. You say you prefer the court of a despot to the sort of existence you are now leading. *À la bonne heure*, there is nothing easier for you to have. I will be the despot with all the pleasure in the world ; the court shall be that of love, and you shall be prime minister. Come back, and see if you do not like the post.

CVIII

PARIS, 1st November 1845.

It is too lonely here without you ; everything reminds me of the “chill October,” which

together we found only too full of delight by day and happy dreams by night. I am off for London to-morrow, to pay my English visits while you are sunning yourself in Spain making wicked love to dark-eyed Señoras. Write me long accounts of the country ; it is one of the many desires of my heart to see it. If you remain in the land of bull-fights and lace mantillas through December, only returning to Paris in January, I should not very much wonder if you found me there on your return. The Scotch visits I have given up ; it is too cold to go so far north, and my English friends will surely see enough of me in the space of time between now and January.

CIX

BEECHWOOD HALL, SUSSEX,
10th November.

It is certainly very nice to find myself back amidst old friends and old scenes after wandering so long, and surely the English have brought the art of living to a perfection unknown in any other land. I confess I take kindly to the smoothness and polished culture of it all, the luxurious homes, and well-trained servants and thoroughly-groomed horses, and the business of life reduced to a well-organised succession of pleasures. There are probably "hitches" of

some sort somewhere, but as a mere guest at delightful country-houses one never discovers them. It was almost dark when I reached the little country station some three miles from this fascinating old place, but a brougham was waiting for me, and a tall footman respectfully handed me a warm cloak and rug, very welcome in the chilly November dusk. After driving along country roads past model cottages and the ivy-covered stone church, we came to a long avenue where the great trees stood like sentinels, and finally reached an open door with a cheerful welcoming light streaming through it, and more tall respectful servitors waiting at the steps. The air of being expected always gives one a pleasant sensation, no matter how often it is repeated. The first hall entered was a tolerably large square one, with an organ standing on one side, a wide fireplace opposite, and one or two chairs and tables. A double oak door and heavy *portières* divide this from the hall proper, a huge apartment with two more fireplaces, fur rugs, divans, lounging-chairs, tall plants, and a billiard-table ; armour and stained glass windows breaking the length of the walls. From this central hall open innumerable rooms, in one of which I found my hostess and several members of the house party, around a cheery tea-table.

Lady G—— is as pretty and delightful as ever, he looks decidedly older than his age

warrants. The beautiful Mrs. W—— is here, also her husband. Poor man, his life is one long apology for the stupid airs she gives herself. There are one or two stray men, an *attaché* of the Austrian Embassy with a very fierce moustache, a delightful man in the Foreign Office, and last, not least, Mr. Gladstone. How he towers above other mortals! I had never met him, and am now delighted at the chance, whether he will deign to speak to so unimportant an individual as myself remains to be seen. Could he only know my immense admiration for his mental qualities and the amount of pleasure he would give me by so doing, he might be persuaded. Every one in the country is talking about him.

More people are coming to-morrow, amongst others, an American woman who sings well. Some of the party seem to expect great "sport" from this particular guest, and I feel strongly tempted to whisper a friendly word of warning in her ear. But would she accept it as friendly? On the whole, I think the experiment too doubtful to risk, Americans are such an unknown quantity to me. I feel sure that I am going to enjoy my visit; the human elements are interesting, and there is something wonderfully attractive in the combination of magnificence and comfort, stateliness and unconventionality, about the life led in these grand old Tudor mansions standing in their acres of sloping wooded parks. Conti-

mental life with all its charm possesses nothing equivalent to it. From here I expect to go to Lord A——'s in Kent, not far from here ; I long for your letter from Madrid, and how I envy you the Murillos ! *A riverderci.*

CX

PARIS, 18th January 1846.

Can there be any being in existence less interesting than a woman with the toothache, or anything on earth more unpleasant than the toothache itself ? I flatter myself that I possess a fair amount of courage in most things, but where a dentist and dentistry is concerned, I own it frankly, I am found wanting. Impossible for me to venture out with my tooth as it now is, and I cannot make up my mind to let a dentist see it.

How good of you to send me so large a donation for the poor family I told you of ; but I should not have said anything about it, I intended to help them entirely myself, and ought not to have troubled you in regard to them. You are too generous.

CXI

PARIS, 10th June.

Are you better this morning, less cross than you were yesterday, less dictatorial and more

human? For your own sake I hope so, as I do not propose seeing you for some time to come, it will not make so much difference to me as it must to you. The books I will send a little later, one of them I lent to a friend who has not yet returned it, but promises to do so before this afternoon. What heavenly weather.

CXII

(Letter missing)

CXIII

DIEPPE, 5th August 1846.

In an old worm-eaten book which I once found in a garret, its title-page gone and the name of its author unknown, I read the following legend: "The world was very new, but few people as yet were in it, and those had not learned how much of evil and sorrow and unhappiness earth can hold; they still kept some of the freshness and glad newness of life, too much, so Satan thought as he left his own kingdom and came to earth for a morning stroll. So few souls had as yet come down to hell that he had plenty of time to spare, and was of far too restless and energetic a disposition to waste the moments in idleness. As he wandered on in the world above, his ill temper increased; every-

thing looked so fresh and sweet, the few mortals he came across were so simple, so kind to each other, so innocently happy. 'This will never do,' Satan finally exclaimed, 'this is entirely wrong. I shall be defrauded of half my population if this sort of thing goes on; hell will be horribly dreary unless I can get some of these nice smiling people down there.' It was in a garden that Satan made these observations, and he sat down to ponder seriously and work out some little problem for stirring up these placid mortals that they might the more quickly come to grief on earth, and change their quarters to his domain below. Now, as a rule, Satan did not think much of gardens, although he had a rather pleasant recollection of the Garden of Eden, where his first venture in tempting a woman had been tolerably successful. But flowers he despised. The very name Forget-me-not absolutely nauseated him; why not call it constancy at once—a word he hated; the passion-flower held that within its purple heart which Satan did not care to see, a cross and nails positively made him shudder. The violet meant humbleness, and the lily of the valley modesty, the dark-eyed pansy deep remembrance—pah! the names disgusted him; how silly those people were to like such things. But stop! none of these flowers just mentioned seemed to be as attractive to the men and women or even the children whom he was

watching in the garden as still another. What was this sweet fair thing they all seemed to carry, or to wear, or to play with, this proud imperial flower growing in such luxuriant profusion, tinted with every shade from deep deep red to the softest flush of pink, or golden yellow to palest cream and snowy white? The rose, the royal rose. Men toyed lightly with the roses, women clasped them tenderly to their breasts, children kissed them and stroked their velvet leaves. A light like flame leaped into Satan's eyes, a fierce lurid light so scorching in its power that men and women said suddenly in surprise, 'How warm it is, how sultry the day has turned, and so quickly too.' And the children languidly stopped playing, and all the roses seemed to droop. Satan left the garden, and wasted no more time on earth; he had plenty of work to do down below. Going into his well-fitted laboratory he looked with pardonable pride upon the rows of bottles and jars ranged upon shelves, the while carefully selecting one here and there, and placing all those chosen together on one separate shelf. Then when he had enough, he complacently read the labels of those set apart: Rapturous Joy, Recklessness; Human Tears; Heart's Blood; Mad Delight; Satiety; Contempt; Peacefulness; Hope; Faith; Despair; Fool's Paradise; Pride; Self-abasement; Distrust; Agony.

A smile of grim satisfaction lighted Satan's

dark clever face. He picked out an empty jar larger than the others, took off the top and placed it beside him, ready; then he got a large bowl, a spoon, and a ladle; then carefully he poured a certain quantity from each bottle, not measuring them, but guessing pretty accurately just what proportion of each was needed for the hell's broth he meant to brew; then with his spoon he mixed them all together in the bowl, and with the ladle dipped out the thick blood-red liquid, pouring it into the waiting jar. After carefully covering this, he labelled it in large letters—LOVE, put back the various bottles, chose out of a drawer three or four paint-brushes of different sizes, and was about to leave the laboratory when a sudden thought struck him. He laughed heartily, 'Jove, to think that I had almost forgotten the perfume. This pretty scientific mixture will deepen the colours but kill the scent, which is of celestial manufacture, not intended to stand much handling from hell. I must dust a perfume over the roses after I have painted them, so sweet that it will deceive the most learned botanist, then the work will be complete, and thousands of men and women will come down to me.' Satan at this added to the jar and the paint-brushes a package of fine gold-dust powder, and left his laboratory, locking the door behind him. His preparations had taken him longer than he had expected, and he had

not much time to reach earth again if he would get there at the only moment when it would be possible for him to paint the roses successfully. This he knew would have to be done as evening was falling and the flowers were tired and thirsty from the day's heat. Just at that hour they would drink the sweet fiery liquid with eagerness, but if the dew of heaven once fell and they drank that instead, it would be useless offering them the devil broth. So Satan hurried and reached the garden just in time. The red roses drank thirstily of the sparkling liquid he offered, and their colour deepened to a dusky bloody tint royal in its beauty. The pink ones drank and flushed to warmer hues; the yellow swallowed hastily, while a living gold seemed to come to their hearts. Only the white ones turned away. They knew that at early dawn they were to be gathered for a burial; that cold crossed feet, and folded hands, and a pure face paler than themselves were lying hushed and still, waiting to be strewn with their white faint fragrance before all should be shut out together from the gay world and the sunshine. So sad were the white roses at what the morning must bring that they turned away from Satan and his broth, they would wait for the pearly dew from heaven; it was the last time they could drink it. Back he went after this rebuff to the red and yellow beauties, dusting them thickly with

the powder, giving them all that the white roses had refused ; and then with the remainder of the broth which the sad pale burial flowers would not touch, he coloured the paint-brushes, and tinted each folded leaf and petal, every stem, and even the thorns. These latter amused him hugely. 'To think that God in heaven gives the thorns to love, and leaves me to colour it so beautifully and give it this bewildering intoxicating scent ! His share of the gift will only prick and give pain, mine will bring wild delight and happiness to men and women at the first, and bring men and women down to me at the last. Ha, ha, a very clever devil are you, Monsieur Satan ; *je vous fais mes compliments.*'"

The legend ended here, or rather the book was torn, and the last leaves missing, so I could read no more, but I never forgot the story, and have often meant to tell it to you. He *is* a clever devil Monsieur Satan, and no mistake.

Just as it happened last year, I got off so late to this place that I much fear I shall be late in getting back to Paris. There are many pleasant people here, and I am amusing myself, but I do not forget to look out for a letter from you when the post comes in. When do you expect to return to Paris ? Take care of yourself, and *do not gather too many roses.*

CXIV

(Letter missing)

CXV

DIEPPE, 20th August 1846.

It grows more and more amusing here, and I am interested in watching several *amourettes* in varying stages. One has reached the point where the Divorce Court will be the only possible ending; another promises considerable excitement when the expected *sposo* arrives upon the scene; a third already gives hope of orange blossoms and marriage settlements; and a fourth is sad. An old story, horribly monotonous, but dolefully miserable. The wrong people joined together, and the right ones discovered too late. There will be no *esclandre*, nothing will happen, only four lives will be, or rather are, blighted. One man will fly to ambition for his comfort, another, eventually, to drink. One woman will worry heaven with her prayers until for very pity's sake heaven will let her in; the other will grow harder and harder, never really sin, but do more harm by her cold goodness than it is given most sinners to accomplish. I watch them all in turn, as the waves come in, break on the shore, and roll back again to the sea, and I decide that the

worst thing in life is its frightful monotony. Are you in Paris? Let me know, I cannot get there yet. Would it give you pleasure if I could come?

CXVI

DIEPPE, 1st September.

A new month entered on to-day and I am still here. Your picture of Paris was dreary, it did not tempt me. I think one is almost more delightfully alone with a person they care for when in a crowd and a whirl than when just they two souls are masters of the situation. Perhaps this subtle distinction is what keeps me here, it is almost worthy of you. The sea seems to be sufficient for my every need at this particular moment. Very few people are left in the place, not one who interests me. The *amourettes* and their respective *dramatis personæ* have taken themselves off to other shores, the *plage* is deserted, the rooms at the *casino* empty, even the *petits chevaux* do no more racing for reckless gamblers. Only the sea and I are left, and we are wonderfully good friends. When I am happy and find life all *couleur de rose*, the sea dances and sparkles in the sunlight and laughs with me for joy. When I would dream it plashes gently beside me and murmurs a low gurgling music that makes my dream go smoothly and in tune; and when I

feel that no gift in life is so good as strength to do and to dare, to battle and to conquer, the sea leaps and roars and towers in high-crested might, dashing everything weak and feeble aside as it rolls on with a noise of mighty thunder. No friend I ever had is so sympathetic as the sea. Until we quarrel, the sea and I, here I shall stop, so write to me here, and miss me, while I love the sea.

CXVII

—, 10th September.

I had to part from the sea after all, a telegram having called me to this God-forsaken place. *Dieu*, how can people exist *en province* ! It is awful. I trust devoutly that Paris will see me again towards the end of the month, or at the latest, in the first week of October. Then I promise to be charming for you, and how good it will seem to be together again. You say that you are doing my picture, or several of them ; what dress have you put me in, is it *grande toilette*, or *négligée*, or what ? I wonder if I can support existence in this awful place until October. If I can only do so without outraging the feelings of my rich godmother, who has promised to leave me her valuable collection of china, it is all I ask.

CXVIII

—, 15th September.

Do not expect me to write to you, I have no ideas, I feel suffocated, and if I stay here much longer I shall make violent love to the *curé*. I should have done so already, only he squints. My godmother fancies that she is consumptive, and dreads a breath of air; her *dame de compagnie* is really consumptive, and speaks below her breath. The china is maddeningly beautiful, or I could not endure being here a day longer. I never did care very much about my godmother; she is a *poseuse*. The poor lady companion I am sorry for, only my sympathy frightens more than it pleases her; she has had so little in her life, poor thing, that she cannot understand it. The *curé* comes to confess the two old souls, and looks as if he would like to confess me too. Instinct doubtless tells him that he would have the liveliest half-hour he has passed for a long time if he only could do so. Oh, how you must spoil me when I come to Paris, to make up for the purgatorial time I am having in this musty old *château* with two invalids and a cross-eyed priest. If only that exquisite china did not fill the place I should take French leave.

CXIX

PARIS, 8th October 1846.

Well, were you content that I should be so glad to meet you again? You see the starving processes I had gone through in purgatory reacted in your favour, and so famished was I for a little life which was really worth the living that I could resist nothing you had to offer. The rain is coming down in long straight lines, the drops scarcely separated by the smallest space. I like a perfectly hopeless rainy day such as this is, with nothing uncertain or doubtful about it, only a steady, deliberate downpour which says, "I mean to rain until I am tired, and nothing you can do will stop me." There is something so determined about such a rain that it commands one's admiration in spite of one's self.

That new tenor who sang at the Italian Opera the other night is going to be a success, the papers are loud in his praise, and prophesy wonders for him. Paris is filling up, and quantities of English are here. Adieu, I am tired.

CXX

(Letter missing)

CXXI

LONDON,
24th February 1848.

I have still no news of my brother, and am terribly anxious. How do you like the new order of things, and will it last? I am most anxious to get to Paris.

CXXII

LONDON, 2d March.

Some friends are going over to-morrow, and I have arranged to cross with them. Let me see you either late to-morrow evening or as early as you can the next day.

CXXIII

PARIS, March 1848.

No, fortunately I lost nothing by the failure of Messrs. —, but since seeing you some friends have almost persuaded me to leave Paris at once. They think things are growing more serious, and that a revolution is inevitable. Would Paris be safe in that case? I do not want to leave you here and go away myself, yet I can hardly give that as my reason for remaining. Do advise me,

CXXIV

PARIS,
Friday, 10th March.

My sore throat grows worse in this weather, and I dare not go out. Do write to me.

CXXV

PARIS, 12th May.

I am going away for a few days with Madame de C——, who declares a "milk cure" will make my throat all right in no time. I wish I could come back and find the political trouble over. *Au revoir.*

CXXVI

M——, 14th May.

Now that I am here I hourly wish myself back in Paris. The times are too stirring to be away from the centre of action. Madame de C—— was right in one thing however, the milk cure has done my throat good, I am almost well. Let me know what goes on at the Chambre ; I hope to see you on Saturday.

CXXVII

(Letter missing)

CXXVIII

LONDON,
29th June 1848.

It is growing insupportable to me, absence from you, when you write of all this horrible carnage and bloodshed around you. I hear cannons in my dreams, and fancy you shot, and bleeding, and dead, and surrounded with every conceivable horror. Here in London the idea of going to Paris at this moment is a madness not to be explained, but I must in some way find a plausible reason for doing that very thing without running the risk of being sent to Bedlam, for see you I must. Your letters are my only comfort, but rather a sorry one, filled as they are with such ghastly details. Do be careful. I am sure you run a great deal of unnecessary risk.

CXXIX

LONDON, 6th July.

It is more than provoking, but I cannot get away at present. The season is a very gay one, and almost without knowing it, certainly without intending it, I am knee-deep in social engagements. It is a bore, but it cannot be helped. I do not fancy the idea of France as a Republic—all its traditions are opposed to such a form of government, all its charm lies in the

atmosphere brought by courts and kings and an ancient *noblesse*. Here they speak openly of the weakness and timid hesitancy of the king, and think that had he shown more firmness he might have saved his throne. The royal exiles will, I presume, eventually find a home in this tight little island, which holds its own through wars and rumours of wars, and keeps its crown steady, no matter what others tumble off or are exchanged for the red cap of "Liberty." Why could you not come to London for a little? I am sure it would amuse you, and the change and rest would do you good.

CXXX

LONDON,
13th July 1848.

I am in a perfect dread of what may happen to-morrow, please send me a despatch or write at once. There is sure to be an *émeute*, and you seem to have a talent for being in the thickest of these sorts of entertainments. I shall be back in six weeks at the latest; let us hope that things will settle down by that time, so that we may have our walks in peace. What a selfish sort of animal a human being is; I fear that I think far more of these walks of ours than of a country's good, *mais, c'est comme ça*. As you may have guessed, you who know me so well, I am hugely dissatisfied with myself to-night;

K

you will think me selfish not to give up my amusements here (and, frankly, I am enjoying myself), while I feel guilty for not doing so, yet cannot find the courage to break off and come. But let us settle on the date in about six weeks, and with much pleasure do I now accept your invitation to breakfast with Lady ——.

CXXXI

(Letter missing)

CXXXII

(Letter missing)

CXXXIII

FERNDAL (on the Thames),
18th August 1848.

London was so hot and deserted that I came down here last week with the R——s, and shall stop with them until I can get over to Paris. It is no use losing your temper because I do not come, and there is less use still in upbraiding me as you do. I am absolutely dependent upon some lawyers who are settling up an estate, and if you wish to know what the word aggravation really means, try and hurry an English lawyer. All I can do is to pray for

patience, and row on the river with the best-looking man I can find to accompany me. And the number is not limited; this pretty spot is near enough to town to allow detained unfortunates to run down and dine and sleep, or to stay from Saturday to Monday, and constant streams of the kind come and go. Mrs. R—— assures me confidentially that it is the only really amusing life she knows of, far and away nicer than London itself; and it is not bad, provided the right people get together. If I could see you coming up the lawn, and if after a pleasant chat at tea-time out on the grass under the oaks I could row you on the river until so late that it would be a scramble to dress for dinner, or let you "punt" me lazily along by the banks while I told you how much I have missed you in spite of my London gaieties, I too might find this life as amusing as Mrs. R—— does; but as I cannot do all this, and am on the contrary restless and anxious to get away in spite of your doubts upon the subject, I do not enjoy the lazy placidity of shady lawns and continued punts as I should under different circumstances. You say that you can give me until the 25th, at three o'clock, and not an hour longer. I feel as if a pistol had been put at my head, a sort of "money or your life" business, your words are so peremptory. Could I only communicate this startling impression to the lawyer, there might be some hope, but the outlook is not

hopeful, and I feel about as cheerful as the dull, brown, slowly-moving river near which I am sitting. There is no sign of a boat, no sound of a human voice, not a glint of sunshine; all nature is in a neutral-tinted mood depressing to a degree, and I feel more neutral, and more dull and more depressed, than nature. I shall reduce myself to tears if I go on writing, I am so sorry for myself, and I think the wisest thing I can do is to bid you good-bye and go and eat some luncheon.

CXXXIV

D—, 21st August.

Very unexpectedly I had to come here at a moment's notice, but it brings me a trifle nearer to Paris, and any change was welcome, so restless was I growing by the banks of that slow brown river. I am afraid a horribly human sentiment was at the bottom of my restlessness while at Ferndale, a humiliating sentiment to own up to, but a very real one. Everybody save myself was enjoying life in his or her particular way, or in the words of the story, there were such lots of good times and I was not in them! You see that just makes all the difference. No one likes to see people enjoy themselves better than I do, always providing that I have a "good time" too, and do not have to play audience for the good times of

other people. I hope you appreciate the honesty of this statement, and can read between the lines sufficiently to see why a good time for me at Ferndale was an impossibility with your reverend self in Paris. If that is not a dainty way of saying many things in a comprehensively small space, then I know not the art of speech. Friday, or at the latest Monday, will see me in Paris. Adieu.

CXXXV

AVENUE JOSÉPHINE, PARIS,
4th November 1848.

How long it seems since I last took up my pen to write to you, it is quite a strange sensation, but if you will be ill, and lose this crisp autumn weather which was made for walking, the least I can do is to try and cheer you on paper. I am rather deaf still from the effects of the firing, and was at first frightened by the cannons; it is not unlike living on top of a frolicsome volcano to be in Paris just now, and I am by no means certain that I enjoy the situation.

Of all the queer collections of odds and ends of people, surely the queerest are gathered together in this house. Never before did I stay in an English pension in Paris, and may I never be so weak-minded as to do it again. The extraordinary experiences these humans

have had, which experiences they detail and retail until one's ears ache, are only fit for a new edition of the *Arabian Nights*. There is an English widow with her two daughters, and (from their own accounts) every princeling in Italy has tried to marry one or both of the young women during the last winter which they spent in Florence. There is a pretty American woman, far too young and too pretty to be left to her own devices, who talks pathetically of how "terribly Charlie misses her," but business keeps him in New York, and she feels it her duty to educate the child here that he may learn the language correctly. The child is a baby of three, the veriest little Turk I ever encountered, and will learn a good bit more than the correct pronunciation of the language if his mamma will only stay in Paris long enough, which I fancy she will willingly do. There is a morbid German who gives lessons in Spanish (did you ever meet a German who did not assure you that he could instruct better in every foreign language than a native could?), and who thinks it his duty to experience sensations between times. His latest experiment in feeling was going to the Morgue, and as it had so completely taken away his own appetite that he could not eat, he generously proceeded to take away ours by giving an account of what he had seen lying on the marble slabs under the water-jets. You know it is at dinner-time only that

I see this human menagerie, and I find once a day gives me quite as much of them as I care about. The lady of the house sits at the head of the table in a moire silk dress, a small beehive-shaped cap on her head, all white lace and red ribbons, and wears gloves with the fingers cut off, showing elaborate rings. Whether she burned her hands when she began life as a kitchen-maid, or whether she imagines this to be a purely French fashion to be strictly followed in France, I cannot say. She gives the ladies around her addresses of the best shops, *i.e.* of those where she probably receives a commission on all purchasers sent, and offers to accompany any of the men to the Bon Marché or to buy their winter flannels for them ; then after dinner she presides over a tea-table in the *salon* upstairs, doling out weak tea at nine o'clock while making conversation. One man is delightful. He is, not to put it too gently, the most stupendous liar I ever met, but he lies so charmingly, and with such *abandon* and cheerful confidence, that his conversation is most refreshing. He is an American, a western man, and extraordinarily unconventional. He has been over more ground in a less space of time than any individual ever compassed before, at least he says so. What he has not seen he describes quite as well as the generality of people tell of the things their eyes have beheld in the flesh, rather better, and skilfully inserts racy anecdotes.

or hairbreadth escapes, or thrilling encounters with men and beasts, all of which one knows as a fact to be moral and physical impossibilities, but one enjoys them just as much as if they were truth, simply from the manner of the telling.

Do send me a line saying that you are better.
Toujours à vous. M.

CXXXVI

PARIS, 30th May 1850.

One word for good-bye although it is so short a time since we spoke "face to face." Do not be too radical the moment you touch British soil, enjoy the good dinners they are sure to give you, and accept with a good grace the compliments they are certain to pay you. Remember, when the English say a civil thing they generally mean it. You rather frightened me this morning with your desperate belief in *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*, and were altogether in such a combative state of mind that you struck me as dangerous; write me all your impressions. How you will hate an English Sunday.

CXXXVII

PARIS, 12th June.

Your letter from London dated the 1st amused me immensely. I am glad you found

a vent for your feelings in Hampton Court, and did not allow the atmosphere of the "Lord's Day" to drive you to suicide. Much as I like London, I confess that the Sabbaths there are trying. You do not mention who were your party, merely say "we," and a day at Hampton Court, as I know by experience, may be very delightful or quite the reverse, according to one's companions. I see by the papers that it is cold in England, whereas here it is lovely, but I will not distract your attention from cathedrals and architecture by rousing disturbing reminiscences of nature's temples, etc. etc. The more closely you attend to buildings there, the more quickly will you be able to return to our woods and forests here, and knowing this I refrain from any word that might lengthen your stay. Adieu.

CXXXVIII

PARIS,
3d July 1850.

Time for only one more letter to reach you before your return ; with how much pleasure do I write this. Your adventure with the man at Salisbury Cathedral to whom you gave half a crown, and who proved to be the person for whom you had a letter of introduction, was extremely funny, but why in the name of all that was wonderful did he keep the money when the mistake was discovered ? His doing

so strikes me as more than odd. Well, no more until we meet. Ah, how glad, how very glad, I shall be to see you again.

CXXXIX

D—,

Saturday, 13th June 1851.

I trust sincerely that your mother is going on well; do not forget that if there is anything I can send her, anything that she may fancy which I can do for her, you are to let me know. You must have been terribly anxious at this last attack, and I have sympathised with you during every hour. The cushion is finished at last, and I send it off this morning. Rest your tired head on it sometimes, and decipher the symbolical design; you will recognise the tree, the branching shady oak, the figure in the distance, and the cold December sky. Need I point out further the tale the picture tells, or its ending?

CXL

—, *18th July 1851.*

How glad I am that I was able to return to Paris from D—, and to see so much of you there during the last few weeks, for now I have been summoned here; the poor old godmother is really ill this time, and I fancy will not be

long in following the departed *dame de compagnie* to a better world. If she lingers on I must stay with her, and cannot be in Paris to meet you on your return from London. This will not please you, I know, but it pleases me far less. If you had not been out of town for the day I could at least have said good-bye to you before leaving, but even that was impossible, as you will understand. *À bientôt*, I hope.

CXLI

PARIS,

Thursday, 2d December 1851.

I am terrified, and would give much to be away from here. The people seem to have gone mad, and they say the soldiers are shooting down the populace in all directions. M. G—— will not allow us to venture out, but goes himself at intervals and brings us news. I suppose there will be no chance of hearing from you to-day, but if it is possible let me have a line to-night to tell me at least that you are safe.

P.S.—Our *concierge* has just been brought in badly wounded. For God's sake be careful.

CXLII

PARIS,

Friday, 3d December 1851.

Your note reached me safely late last night, and found me anxiously waiting for news of you. What is this about the President, and is it true that Cavaignac and Thiers are among those arrested? Is Paris to be placed in a state of siege? I send this by N——, and have told him to bring your answer with him if he can find you. I feel punished for my wish so often expressed that if anything exciting occurred here I might be on the spot to witness it. I have seen all that I want to see of political agitations, and one *coup d'état* is enough for a lifetime. It is so much harder to sit quietly at home and only learn of things from a distance. I envy you for being on the spot, and for being in the thick of the fight, but again I implore you, be careful.

CXLIII

PARIS, 23d March 1852

One of the best, perhaps the very best friend I ever had, is dead. How simple the words are to write, how unutterable is the depth of their meaning, the infinity of the loss they represent! The world seems so dreary to-night, life

looks such a bitter failure, and what is yet to come stretches out in such gloomy empty nothingness. Why is it that those most sorely needed here seem the first to be taken away? It made me feel strong only to be near this friend, she played her part in life so bravely from the moment life thrust a part upon her, never flinching herself, no matter how hard the task set her; never failing others, no matter how severe the test demanded by friendship. No one ever helped me as she has helped, and I am but one of many who could say the same. No one ever had greater trials, ay, and doubts too, than she, yet before the end came she had triumphed over all. Time and suffering, suffering and time, brought redemption at last, but it came from the conflict fought silently within, not by loud outward wailing and moaning. My loss is very great, and to-night I feel stranded. Even your presence, I think, I cannot bear just yet—a soul must be alone when a great trial comes, the cup of affliction is too small for two or more to share, it is filled for one alone. Adieu.

CXLIV

PARIS, 22d April 1852.

I have followed the course of this "*affaire Libri*" with keen interest, and my pride in you

increases at every stage of it. You do indeed understand the meaning of the word friendship. How staunch and loyal you are ! Uninfluenced by any one's opinion, and guided only by what you feel to be right ! Will it help you through all the disagreeable annoyance of the thing to know that I most warmly and cordially approve every step that you have taken, that I sympathise with you, love you, and am very proud of you ?

CXLV

PARIS, 23d April.

If they really condemn you to prison let me know at once. Come to see you there ? But of course, arrange that I shall be allowed to do so, and let me know if there is anything that I can attend to for you during all this annoying business. It is M. Libri who is to be congratulated upon having such a friend as you. Command me in any way, and believe that you have my whole love and sympathy.

CXLVI

PARIS,

Saturday Morning, 2d May.

My poor friend, your note has this moment reached me. What can I say, what can any one say to you at such a moment ? I know

how deep your attachment was to your mother, and although her death was not unexpected, does any amount of preparation ever really prepare us for these partings which leave us so poor, so beggared of love, so desolate in loneliness? I think not. No love on earth can be so pure as that of a mother for her child, and its infinite tenderness and holiness must, I think, last on and be a blessed unseen shield around him even after its bodily expression has been silenced.

In the first sharpness of loss we cannot realise that it must be better with those who have gone than had we kept them here; but the knowledge, when love is real as was yours, must in time bring a peace and consolation with it. You helped me so much by your friendship when a short time since sorrow came so sharply to me, let me try and help you now when I know how sore and wounded and grief-laden your own heart must be.—Your friend always.

CXLVII

(Letter missing)

CXLVIII

PARIS, *Wednesday Morning.*

I shall think of you all day. Let me know the very first moment that you can after the

decision is rendered what the verdict is. If they actually send you to prison it will be shameful on the part of the judges, but will only prove that no man was ever so firm a friend as is Prosper Mérimée. How proud M. Libri ought to be. How proud I am that I can claim Prosper Mérimée as *my* friend.

CXLIX

Wednesday Evening.

The wretches!!! *Quinze jours de prison et mille francs d'amende!* Let me know where and when you can see me.—Your friend who honours loyalty and is loyal to you.

CL

PARIS, 31st May.

I feel myself to be frightfully guilty because I breathe this life-giving sunshine while you are behind bars, and I am well and almost cheerful even while I have to take my walks alone and you can take none at all. It must be the pride I feel in hearing every one speak of you as they do, as they could not help doing, for but one opinion exists as to your loyalty, courage, and coolness during the whole of this Libri affair.

But what a tangle of a world it is, where

such things are possible. I hope that you received the book safely ; let me know when you have finished with *Beyle*. Think of our not even being able to quarrel !

CLI

—, 11th September.

While you are wandering in Touraine I decided that it would be a capital idea for me to come and pay my respects to the godmother, and at the same time take a look at my (prospective) china. It is all right—the china, not the godmother. This latter is as unpleasantly wrong as a cross-grained old woman who ought to die and does not, possibly can be. No one has a greater veneration for dignified old age, silver locks, and all the rest of it, than I have, and above all things do I delight in a beautiful old lady who wins your love and respect by calm cheerfulness and sweetness as she nears the end of a long life. But I ask you, Can one interest one's self in a querulous, selfish, old creature who is always demanding sympathy for imaginary ills when she is as sound as a dray horse and has not a lovable quality in her whole disposition ? No ; it is the china, and nothing but the china, which forces even decent outward civility from me to this detestable old woman whose name I bear, and who

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in my infancy undertook to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil on my account. She could only, I judge, have been persuaded to do so by the hope that my share of such vanities might fall to her, for to things carnal she is wedded until her useless tyrannical old life ends. I know she drove that unlucky woman who had to live with her out of the world by simple nagging, for never in the whole course of my experience have I found any one such a past mistress of the art. In spite of her assurances to the contrary, she is perfectly capable of altering her will at the last moment, and leaving all this exquisite Sèvres to anything or any person beside myself; hence my penitential pilgrimages to this dreary spot, and my efforts to be entertaining when I get here. Only a day or two longer, however, shall I be able to stand the strain on my temper; then I shall go, I think, to England, perhaps Scotland, for a few visits, devoutly praying that a kind Providence may gather the godmother to her fathers before it is time for me to come here again. Write to me of all that you see and do, and miss me, weary for me as I do for you each day and hour.

CLII

(Letter missing)

CLIII

LONDON,
30th September 1852.

Why will you persist in travelling when you are not fit for it? Your letter has caused me the greatest anxiety, and your account of the sudden attack you seem to have had makes me quite miserable. It is very wrong of you to do this sort of thing. Do return to Paris; I will give up my visits and meet you there at any date you name. I wrote to you on your birthday, but you do not appear to have received the letter; our epistles must have crossed. Now be sensible, come . . .

CLIV

(Letter missing)

CLV

PARIS,
10th October 1853.

Your two last letters, dated the Escorial, 5th October, and Madrid, 25th October, have both reached me together this morning. Did you carry the first in your pocket until you found a travelling companion for it, or are the postal arrangements in Spain entirely out of

order? Well, here they both are, and that is something, very much indeed, for they have given me great pleasure. Your suggestion that if there is anything I wish for I have but to speak to obtain it, is too noble a one for me not to respond to. I much wish for a Spanish fan such as Madame de C—— had, the one whose history you told me. Bring me that, and I will say thank you with effusion. The little flower which you send in your second letter has even yet a faint sweet perfume, and I can fancy it breathing to me some of the thoughts which I know you had in sending it. *Merci, mon ami.* The years as they pass do not, I think, lessen our friendship. Tell me, have I kept the compact well which we made so long ago? No, do not tell me; not on paper at least. A question like that should be asked and answered in far different fashion; hand in hand and heart to heart, with frank true eyes looking the reply before the words can form themselves in speech.

Your account of the *comédie* which you superintended at Carabanchel interested me; your young goddesses must have been delightful. I am glad that a little play is mixed with all your work, and that the *rôle* of Apollo has fallen to you in so goodly a company. You have such a wide catholicity of sympathy that as consoler I should imagine all classes come tolerably comfortably within your compass.

The Court has just gone to Compiègne, and Nieuwerkerke was not invited ; they say, however, that he has taken a villa in the town. The Princess M—— is more " Russian " than ever. M. D—— tells me that she encourages her "cousin the emperor" in all that he does. Adieu, *amusez-vous bien, mais*——

CLVI

PARIS, 30th October 1853.

Les affinités électives. I will not forget to remind you of the name on your return, but do give me some faint idea of when that is to be. Are you going to pass the remainder of your life in Madrid? I shall begin to believe that you have gathered roses there, the reddest you could find, if you do not soon move on to other cities. By all means bring the handkerchiefs, the buttons I do not care for. For your third suggestion, *les jarretières*, know, O sage, that such articles are no longer worn by any woman possessing the slightest consideration for the shape of her leg!

The arrest of Delescluse, *ancien commissaire* of Ledru Rollin, and of Goudchaux, *ancien* Minister of Finance during the Republic, is causing much comment; and they say that other arrests of importance have been made at Tours, Nantes, and Nevers. The emperor is

blamed for showing too great clemency to the men sure sooner or later to disturb his reign.

I am glad that at last you will confess to finding beauty in at least part of *Wilhelm Meister*. I think Goethe has put some of his most exquisite thoughts within its pages, yet until now you have always laughed at me for saying so. Ah, do come back; writing for a constancy is so poor a compensation for our walks, and the weather here is wonderfully good.

CLVII

PARIS, 25th November.

How absurd you are about the garters! The *femmes de chambre* were about right to be indignant at the idea of your bringing such things for *souvenirs*. Why are the diplomatic representatives of the United States always extraordinary people who do extraordinary things? It is everywhere the same story. Remind me to tell you an anecdote of the American Minister in London, which is even more amusing than yours of the man in Spain, or rather of his son. If you die in Madrid, do you wish to be buried there, and shall I come to your funeral? *Ma foi*, I believe you have discovered that "one friend" about whom you told me so long ago, and that accounts for your continued absence. Am I right?

CLVIII

PARIS, 1st December 1853.

Just as well, *mon cher*, that you say you have "tant d'envie" to see me again, after telling me such a disgraceful story as the one about "la belle," whose shoulders were placed "à la disposition de V." The customs of a country are sometimes odd things, but to this one I doubt not that you took kindly. Seriously, it is just as well that you should return to your native land.

The Court comes back to-day from Fontainebleau, where the emperor insisted upon the strictest etiquette. No one was allowed to sit in his presence, whether he himself was seated or not! Your empress is much interested in the form of spiritualism which makes tables talk. M. Guizot has been instrumental in this fusion of the two branches of the House of Bourbon, while M. Thiers is, they say, furious at it, and is all for the Empire.

When you decide to come back you will find a warm and loving welcome from yours
loyally, M.

CLIX

D—, 31st July 1854.

Your letter of the 29th has just been forwarded to me here. Am more distressed than

I can say to learn that you are suffering, also at the news of your friend's illness. By this time I trust you are both better. No ; I have no idea of going to London at present, so continue writing to me here. My plans are very unsettled, and I may at any moment be called to ——, as I hear that my godmother is very ill.

CLX

D——, 22d August 1854.

Louis XIV after the battle of Ramillies said — “*Dieu a donc oublié tout ce que j'ai fait pour lui ?*” What have I done, or left undone, what has Providence forgotten or remembered against me, that so heavy a blow should fall upon me? Can you credit it, when I tell you that that unscrupulous woman, that shameless godmother of mine, has died, actually gone out of the world, and left no will behind her! All my promised china, the priceless old Sèvres, for the sake of which I have endured so much, goes to a distant cousin, who has never suffered anything at the hands of the old infidel, for the simple reason that he never saw her. The Château of ——, with its pictures and furniture and plate, all go with the china, everything, in fact, passes into the hands of a man who does not need it, and is incapable of appreciating it. When I remember the weeks and months of

boredom I have suffered in the society of that woman, the number of times I have smiled when I could readily have wept with weariness at her querulous complaints, the restraint I have put upon that unruly member, the tongue, that no word of mine might jeopardise the china, I could be desperate in many ways. It really is trying, for the one weakness to which I plead guilty with no reservations is a love of rare china; and that promised to me by this wretch of a godmother was worth waiting for. Console me by a long letter; it is all that is left me. If I could be with you in your journeyings, see nature in her loveliest moods, and see how each one in turn affected you, there might be hope for me; but to be here alone (for Madame de C—— has not yet arrived), knowing my china to be gone for ever, and you to be absent indefinitely, is more than I can bear with serenity.

CLXI

D——,

6th September 1854.

The little flower from Innsbruck came safely, and seemed to echo the closing words of your letter—" *Écrivez-moi très-longuement et très-tendrement.*" You must know so well that all the tenderness of my whole being is for you,

and for you alone ; but that you should care to hear it anew is not displeasing to me in the year 1854, when I remember that it was in 1840 the word "tenderly" first grew to be a prominent word in our mutual dictionary. Ah, love, you have loved me well, in joy and in sorrow, through sunshine and with clouded skies ; "loyal and true" your motto, and unchanging faith your creed. Few women can claim as much, none could ask for more.

I am curious to hear your opinion of Vienna ; it is a place which fascinated me at first merely as a sightseer, when I superficially enjoyed the gay Ringstrasse and the enchanting shops, the curious vault of the Capucine Church, the Volks Garten with Strauss himself as leader of the orchestra, and the procession of Corpus Christi in which walked the emperor, and archdukes, and Hungarian noblemen in marvellously picturesque attire. Later I found in the fair city by the Danube a society more charming than that of any city I know, a hospitality which no other capital can equal. If you once find yourself among the agreeable Viennese, I fear me your return will be a matter of time and patience, the former yours, the latter mine. I know well the fascination of Austrian men and women, and the numerous delights of Austrian life. You will find it *gemüthlich*, and once under the spell of that word you are lost.

CLXII

D—,
 1st October 1854.

Your letter tells me nothing. You have not yet reached Vienna! Such as it is, your letter, it has come to me just as I am leaving this place for Paris, where you will find me if you return within reasonable time.

CLXIII

PARIS,
 10th October 1854.

Ah, so "really truly" you find Vienna to be "*un séjour agréable*." I should have been terribly disappointed had you thought otherwise, for in so thinking you would not only have thrown great discredit upon my good taste, but proved your own to be very bad. I can scarcely wait for you to tell me in person all your experiences, in letter form they are always interesting and never satisfactory. The anecdote you relate of the Belgian Minister and Gortschakoff was most witty. Did I ever tell you of having met Prince Gortschakoff at Wildbad? Two amusing incidents are connected with the occasion: one, that the clever Russian paid me a compliment which will remain enshrined in my memory for frequent grateful reference when I grow old and loqua-

cious ; the other will be a useful warning to me never to play the part of cat's-paw for ambitious old ladies. The compliment arose from the fact that the prince spoke innumerable languages equally well, reminding me, in his fearless use and ready application of them, of a man I once saw throwing knives at a New Year fair at Neuilly. My own conversational powers were limited in their expression to English, French, and German. One afternoon when Gortschakoff was seated by me under the trees at Wildbad, a very beautiful countrywoman of his own, Princess D——, came towards us, exquisitely dressed, and her hands full of yellow roses. Like most Russians, she too spoke almost every tongue, and holding out a rose she stopped before us saying in Italian with an entrancing smile, "Your favourite colour, prince ; are you not coming to hear the music?" He took the flower, paid her a pretty compliment, and sat down again, while the lady, not overpleased, walked on. "Why do you not join her?" I asked ; "she can speak in almost as many foreign tongues as you do." — "*Comment, madame, you would seriously suggest my leaving a woman who can converse with esprit in three languages for the pleasure of hearing silly things said in six by une jolie poupée ? You flatter me.*" He slowly pulled the fragrant *Gloire de Dijon* rose to pieces, leaf by leaf, and remained with me during the rest of the after-

noon, while the beautiful princess enjoyed the music as best she could without him. Remind me when we meet to show you the photograph of himself which Prince Gortschakoff gave me at this time. It is an oval vignette ridiculously like the one you have of M. Thiers. In signing his name he has spelt it Gortchacow.

My story of playing cat's-paw is a longer one, but more instructive. You may have met Lady M—— (not our mutual friend, however) in London. You know she began life at the bottom of the social ladder, as also did Mrs. B——, not an Englishwoman by birth, but to-day quite a feature in English society. Well, both ladies desired the attentions of the Russian Chancellor for themselves, and neither wished the other to have them, so Lady M—— encouraged me in keeping the prince from Mrs. B——, which lazily amused me for the moment. She herself, however, was not so much amused at the ultimate arrangement of things, and eventually she became as bitter an enemy of mine as she had caused Mrs. B—— to become, while Prince Gortschakoff bored me in the end, when I found other and younger men to talk to. He soon departed, and I saw him no more; on the contrary, the delightful parties of Lady M—— and the agreeable dinners of Mrs. B—— in London continue, *mais je n'y suis plus*. I wonder whether the cat grew philosophical when she licked her poor

burned paw, or whether she sadly and wisely came to the conclusion that in future she would let other people's chestnuts alone?

The *Légitimistes* were wild with joy when the news which came from Vienna that Sebastopol was taken proved to be false, and even circulated the report that the English and French had sustained a defeat.

The American Bonapartes, father and grandson, dined with the Princess M—— a few days ago. M. Chaix d'Est Ange was present, and gave it as his opinion, privately, that the marriage of Mademoiselle Paterson, which had been broken by an imperial decree of the first Napoleon, could not be recognised by the present emperor. The ex-king of Westphalia sent for him to consult upon the subject. His Majesty favours the Bonaparte-Paterson claims, and poor M. Chaix is in a terrible quandary, not wishing to displease the powers that be! Adieu.

CLXIV

VERSAILLES, 18th July 1856.

No, the two years that have passed have made no difference ; all that you speak of wishing I will do, even to meeting you in London if it is a possible thing to arrange dates. Let me know just when you will return there.—
Yours always as always, MARIQUITA.

P.S.—What souvenirs there are in every detail of this spot. Have you forgotten? Can you ever forget?

CLXV

(Letter missing)

(His letter CLXV and her letter CLXVI both missing.)

CLXVII

DIEPPE, 29th July 1856.

Not a word from you since your letter dated London, 20th July, and I have been anxious to hear how you like country-house life in Scotland. If Sundays are bad in England they are worse there. Do write me of your experiences. I am enjoying the sea as much as I always do, but am growing anxious to hear from you. What you proposed to me when we last met I have thought of carefully but cannot yet see my way to approving of the plan. Let us wait and talk it over. I feel sure that will be a wiser course than to decide hastily before we meet.

CLXVIII

(Letter missing)

CLXIX

PARIS,

Sunday, 14th December 1856.

As you tell me to do so, I will send this to Cannes, but fear it will reach that place before you do. Where do you think I spent my morning? At Versailles, where I made a pilgrimage in memoriam. Quite alone I went, for the hundreds of Sunday sightseers I did not count, they only made the place more lonely to me, besides, not one among them knew our haunts, our shady grove now wind-blown and desolate, our corner of the gallery passed by and hidden from sight. You will ask why I went to look at summer's bloom and living greenness turned to winter's frost and cold. Ah, why indeed? Some restless spirit seemed to urge me on; I felt forced to gaze upon that thing dead which living we must never face again, and what instead do you think I found? A tiny budding root which pierced through the hard earth in our grove, and clear sunlight pouring in through the once fast-closed window of our dusky gallery corner! What does it emblem and predict, this life and light where only stillest memories were laid in darkness? Oh, love, let it mean what light and life should always mean, truth not falsehood, goodness not evil, faith not suspicion. Will you agree to this, and

not crush the bud or darken the sunlight? Our letters are sure to cross each other. I wonder if you too have in these past days given a thought to Versailles and the strange unreasonness of the time spent there?

CLXX

GENEVA, 20th August 1857.

Oh this fascinating place, why have I allowed so many years to roll over my head without seeing it? Yesterday we went to the Castle of Chillon, spent the night at Vevay, and only returned here this evening. I took Byron with me, and grew as enthusiastic as even he could have wished over the fate of the lonely prisoner. I could see the "sunbeam which hath lost its way," although as a matter of fact the sun at the moment of our being there was high overhead and no stray beams were wandering about; I felt how "cankering a thing" iron could become as I touched the rings attached to the "seven pillars of Gothic mould," and so fully did I realise the human suffering which had spent itself in vain longings and hopeless despair within those "dungeons deep and old," that I too looked upon Chillon's prison as a "holy place" and found its "sad floor an altar." There certainly is an immense pleasure in

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travelling, not merely in the varying scenes of the moment, but in the store of memories to be garnered up as mind food for future years. We have allowed ourselves three weeks for our trip, at the end of which time I shall hope to meet you again in Paris. Venice is included in our programme ; in fact, I fancy that most of our time will be spent there. I have but one regret, that is, that we could not have made the journey together. This regret will, I feel certain, only increase as the days go on, and will culminate at Venice the first time I glide along the canal in a gondola, where you are not, but where I shall think of you, dream of you, and long for you. Ah, *mon ami*, you must be first always, far away or close beside me, absent and present always my first thought, my one deep happiness, my loyal love.

This ends the letters to which answers are found in the first volume of Prosper Mérimée's *Lettres à une Inconnue*. The first of his letters in the second volume, to which one of hers applies in answer, is number CLXXII, dated Paris, Lundi Soir, 29 Janvier 1858. Anything of hers between number CLXX and CLXXIV seems to be missing.

CLXXIV

PARIS, Sunday, 25th April 1858.

Do I miss you? *Mais je le crois bien*; however, it may be just as well that you are for the moment absent, as I can better attend to the wants of my numerous friends, all of whom seem to have turned up at the same moment, and all of whom are prepared to see sights, and to shop, and to hear the new plays, under my personal supervision, so you see that my work is cut out for me for some time to come. Write me about your work in England, and of how you and M. Panizzi get on at the British Museum. During one winter that I spent in London I had a card of admittance for the reading-room of that venerable institution, but invariably a thick fog would come up as soon as I reached the building, and total darkness would come upon the inner rooms of the library; and into these rooms no light could be carried; and the book I needed at the time was invariably to be found only in that corner of the place; *ergo*, my card of admittance did me but little good, and the amount of reading I accomplished at the British Museum was of the smallest. At Madame Walewska's last ball the emperor paid marked attention to Madame Gréville, an extremely pretty woman. At last, after about an hour's conversation, he tried to convince her that he was the emperor,

but without raising his mask. She was incredulous, when Cæsar finally said, "*Voyez ce petit salon de repos, il n'y a que l'Empereur et l'Impératrice qui puissent y entrer*"—and immediately he did enter!

CLXXV

PARIS, 30th April

I have been studying one married life that seems absolutely and entirely happy. Mr. and Mrs. X—— have been here for a month, and I have seen them every day, sometimes several times a day during that time. They have been married fifteen years, and are the cheeriest people and the best friends I ever saw. At the time of their marriage he was a young army officer on slender pay, she had some little money of her own. They divided everything; she gave him half of her interest as it fell due, he gave her half of his pay when it was received. If they went to the theatre together each bought their own ticket, if they took a friend they divided the expense of his between them. Half the household expenses came out of the husband's pocket, half out of the wife's, and when remonstrated with by other women who deplored this as a terribly bad precedent, little Mrs. X—— only laughed, and answered stoutly, "Why should Fred work all day and do all the paying besides? I don't call it

fair ;" and things went on as before, the same principle of equality entering into everything. Many a time it would have been more than easy for the pretty wife to have spent all her own portion of income, that actually belonging to her, and the half of his besides, but the idea of so doing never entered her head ; it was share and share alike as simply and lovingly as two children cutting an apple into two equal parts. He has now left the army, and is rapidly amassing a fortune, but the old principle holds good as it did when pay-day came for the young lieutenant. Two such cordial hearty good friends I have never seen, hopes, joys, fears, trials, and love shared equally between them even as the gold and silver is, and a great happy whole is the result. Why cannot more people live lives like this, instead of holding up marriage as the greatest failure of the age ? Are you never coming home ? The young leaves are growing to shady branches, and our woods are all fresh and sweet and cool in the glad spring which will so soon grow to summer. Let the very first words of your next letter tell me the day of your return.

CLXXVI

PARIS, *Thursday Morning.*

It was good to see you again ; letters are but a poor substitute for sight and touch and hear-

ing. I am glad that all my friends are gone, even Mr. and Mrs. X——, charming as they were ; the time is ours now, with no outside interruptions to try one's temper and spoil one's days. *À demain.*

CLXXVII

PARIS, Thursday, 20th May 1858.

It does indeed seem *un siècle* since we had a good long old-fashioned talk such as we used to have in the days of long ago. This month of May has not fulfilled its promises. The picture of myself you shall have of course before I leave ; let us hope the *demi-heure de patience* will be productive of a good result, artistically speaking, morally I find the time a trifle short for much result of any kind. M. D—— has just told me the following anecdote. I give it you for what it is worth. The Duc de Malakof in returning from the races met the Duc d'Aumale, who, standing up in his carriage and waving his hand, cried, "*Vive le Duc de Malakof.*"

The marshal stepped out of his carriage and thanked the Duc d'Aumale for his generous sympathy, when the duke made him a most flattering little speech. Be quite certain that you do return by the 29th, for having joined a party of friends for this summer trip I am no

longer quite my own mistress, that is, I could not possibly put off our departure even for a day, if the penalty were to go without bidding you good-bye, so pray allow *nothing* to keep you beyond the promised time. Adieu, *mon ami, cher ami*, so loyal and so true.

CLXXVIII

G—, 10th June 1858.

The book is simply frightful, badly written and extremely immoral. How could you send me such a perverted view of human nature? The second portrait did not resemble me in the least, so why do you regret it?

Forgive me for . . . *mais n'en parlons plus*. Am too tired after my long journey to write more. M.

CLXXIX

(Letter missing)

CLXXX

G—, 10th July.

Your mention of Innspruck reminds me of an unsolved mystery in my life. It was during the first summer after I had studied German at Hannover, when I knew just enough of the

language to understand almost all that I heard said, yet not quite all. My guardian had taken me for a month's journeying, allowing a school friend to be of the party. She also knew about the same amount of the language that I did, no more, no less. At Innspruck the hotel was noisy and uncomfortable, so we took rooms for a week at a *pension* perched up on a hill away from the railway disturbances which on the first night of our stay had prevented us from sleeping. My friend and I shared a large room together, and far other noises, although not less disturbing ones, deprived us of all rest on the second night. Perhaps strictly speaking I should not say all sleep, for tired out we had retired early, and slept at once, and it was between ten and eleven o'clock that a strange harsh laughter, and then the sound of bitter weeping, roused us both at the same moment. Through the chink of the door between our apartment and the one next to it came a line of light, and we could hear voices in the same direction. "No, no ; I will never do it ! You may kill me, but I will never do it !"

This in German spoken in a high female voice, interrupted by sobs. Although we sprang out of bed and listened at the crack of the door, neither of us could hear the reply to this, but we could plainly distinguish two voices speaking, evidently those of a young man and an elderly woman. "*Ach lieber Himmel*, torment me

no more!—Heinrich, Heinrich, *wo bist du?* Again both voices answered her together, the man's loud and angry, and twice we could hear him ask tauntingly, "Thou wilt not do it? thou wilt not? But we shall see." A whole volley of abuse followed in the shaking uncertain tones of the old woman, but, strain our ears as we might, we could comprehend not one word. Suddenly the man's voice changed entirely, his chair moved, and we imagined it to be drawn closer to the girl, while the words came softly—" *Liebe Meme ich liebe dich.*" The sobs ceased, but in their place came a laugh so mirthless, so dreary in its wordless woe, that it seemed to chill us with a sudden cold, warm as was the night. Then once again the girl moaned out the name she had already spoken—"Heinrich, Heinrich."—"Let her sleep now; go," the old woman said authoritatively; a chair moved, a sword clanked, and a man's step crossed the room quietly, the door closed.

He was an officer, then, the man. Who in the name of wonder could the girl be, and the woman, and what tragedy was being enacted within our very hearing? Wide awake and greatly marvelling we crept back to bed, and soon the light behind the communicating door was extinguished.

The next morning we told my guardian of the wonders of the night, and he, in course of conversation with the Hauss Wirth, mentioned

that anything said in the room adjoining ours could be heard. The man only shrugged his shoulders ; he evidently considered it no affair of his. " Who occupies the room ? " my guardian continued. Another shrug—" A young lady who is ill, and an attendant or nurse who is travelling with her."—" And who is the officer who visits this young lady at midnight ? " was the next question asked. At this the man scowled angrily, and answered shortly that he did not play the spy upon his guests, nor did he care to be questioned about them by others staying in the house ; if Monsieur did not like the rooms there were doubtless plenty of others to be had in Innsbruck. *Bref*, my guardian got decidedly the worst of it in the encounter with the landlord, and, manlike, showed his resentment of that fact by pitching into us, calling us a couple of imaginative young simpletons who had probably dreamed the whole thing. But when night came we proved him to be wrong, for although we went early to our room nothing was further from our intentions than going to sleep. Taking our position near to the long opening of the ill-fitting door, we listened. All was still at first, although we thought we heard some one turning the leaves of a book as though reading. About nine o'clock a knock came, and in a low tone the old woman said, " Herein ; " then came the click of spurs, and the clanking of a sword

which was quickly taken off and laid on the table. "*Sie schläft*," the woman almost whispered, and there was a long silence. Later the two talked together, but in too low a tone for us to catch a word; and at last the girl awoke. At first she did not appear to discover the presence of the officer, but asked whether she might go out the next day if the sun shone. "I am so cold, so cold; and will Heinrich never come?" This plaintively like a little child; then in frightened, shrieking tones—" *Ach, mein Gott, mein Gott, is he here!* Send him away, away, away!" The voice grew shriller and shriller, reaching almost to a scream, and then came the same weird dreadful laugh which had so startled us the night before. Just as it had been then, the same tragic comedy was played: the girl swore that nothing would tempt her to do the thing, whatever it might have been, that they were urging upon her, while the man first threatened, then told her he loved her, then went softly away as she fell into the curious unnatural stillness. Quite worn out with excitement, both my friend and I slept far beyond the breakfast hour the next morning, and the first thing I heard was my guardian calling through the door, "Look quickly, girls, if you want to see your mysterious neighbours; they are just driving away." In very light attire we both rushed out upon the balcony as a closed

carriage passed before it. At the window nearest us was a white face with dark wild eyes, and opposite sat a good-looking young Prussian officer. Was it the fancy of our imagination suddenly startled from dreamland, or was it truth, that the terrified face at the window seemed to look up to us in imploring despair? We never knew, and the travelling carriage was quickly out of sight.

Should I ever go to Innsbruck again I would hunt out that *pension*, and if that uncommunicative old Hauss Wirth still lives I would bribe him well if only I could persuade him to tell me the true story of the girl and the officer and the old woman.

I enclose you an exact drawing of what I want you to get for me at Venice, as you are so good as to offer to execute commissions there. There is an old curiosity shop in a tiny narrow street off the Grand Canal where I once saw something like it. If among the hundred different curiosity shops you can find this one, you will have no further trouble; if you think the commission too complicated do not bore yourself with it. Write soon to *votre amie sincère*.

CLXXXI

CHAMOUNIX, 12th August.

The people I am with are such conscientious sightseers that I am forced, whether I like it

or not, to climb mountains and explore valleys, to rhapsodise over waterfalls and go into ecstasies over glaciers. As for finding a moment in which to write, that is an impossibility pure and simple ; but you, by some method known only to yourself, seem to make time for letters which only grow longer and more delightful the more you have to occupy you, so do not curtail yours because mine may become shorter. Habit, they say, is the great master of our lives ; you have accustomed me for so long now to receiving your letters that my life would seem barren indeed without them. So write quickly and often.

CLXXXII

1st September 1858.

Ah, what would I not have given to be with you at Venice when you assisted at the *Funzione* in honour of the archduke ! Six hundred gondolas, with lights and music, on the Canal ; why, it must have been fairy-like in the effect—a picture well worth remembering. I am glad that you thought of me and wished for me at Venice ; it surely is the place of all others where one needs a kindred soul. Moonlight falling in its magic witchery on those palaces which architecturally you find *sans goût et sans imagination*, turns them to dreams in

stone; and the gliding noiselessness of the gondolas, the mysteriousness of the bridge-spanned water, the winged lion clearly outlined against a starry sky, the whole dreamy wistfulness of the scene makes one long to see it while close beside a heart that sympathises with the hushed beauty and needs no words to tell its sympathy. I know so well the touch of sadness in Venice air and Venice loveliness, and could we feel it together I am certain it would be no grief-laden sadness, but only one heavy with love. Let me know when you propose returning to Paris, and do not get back too late in the season for our walks.

CLXXXIII

4th October 1858.

No; the letter from Brescia never reached me, and I regret its loss. Impossible to get to Paris just yet, so do put off your return. I have been rather ill, and do not care to exchange this bracing mountain air for Paris streets. You will, I suppose, soon be at Cannes, where, at this time of the year, I should think you would find yourself the sole inhabitant.

CLXXXIV

15th October.

. . . And less still do I like the English proverb which you so unblushingly apply to

me—"You look one way and row another." Where, if I may ask the question, did you pick up such an elegant and refined expression? If I did not object to slang on principle I could quote another to you which would be a worthy answer; but you would carefully learn it, and I should be free from it never again, so I refrain. Of course you will be furious with me if I am not in Paris when you arrive, *mais, mon cher*, I much fear that is exactly what will happen; I shall be some several hundred miles distant, and you will lose your temper all to no purpose. Trusting that by some good fortune you will have remained on at Cannes, I will send this letter there. If you have left, and it is forwarded too late for you to receive it before discovering for yourself that Paris is as yet not blessed with my presence—well, I can only say *tant pis* for Paris; I being safely out of the way cannot come to much harm, and when we do finally meet you will have forgiven me, as you always do forgive.

CLXXXV

(Letter missing)

CLXXXVI

PARIS,

Saturday, 20th November 1858.

Eh bien, it is now my turn to be desperate! I return to Paris hoping to find an answer to

my last letter which has evidently missed you ; I send at once to ask whether you can give me to-morrow, and the answer comes back that monsieur is at Compiègne with their Majesties the emperor and empress! *Me voilà plantée*. A whole long Sunday without you when I had so counted on your presence, and heaven only knows how much longer time you mean to play the courtier and bask in Imperial favour. It really is too trying. You will get this to-morrow morning, on the happy Sunday I had counted upon for us to pass together. If I write more I shall say something I may regret, so disappointed am I, so thoroughly upset by finding you gone. What could have become of my last note from G——? It told you that I was coming, and said many things which I flatter myself you would have cared to hear. But even if it had reached you I suppose an Imperial summons would have put aside its little humble claim, and this would have been almost worse than feeling certain that you never received the letter. Are their Majesties going to ask you very often, and just at the very times I want you? Much comment is being made, and not of a flattering kind either, over the rumoured appointment of Monsieur H—— as Minister of Public Works.

CLXXXVII

PARIS, Thursday, 23d November.

Finding that I must resign myself, I do so with as good a grace as possible. The whole morning of yesterday I spent at the Louvre, going first of all to see my beloved *Vénus de Milo*. The calm, passionless beauty of her face always throws a spell over me; it begins to work as I first see her from the end of the long gallery after mounting the staircase and turning to the left, and it grows in its subtleness at every step which brings me nearer to the fair still woman. Very strongly do I incline to the opinion that she is no Venus, there is too much restfulness, which tells of strength, in the face, too much meaning and depth of feeling to be the emblem of Love's goddess. If her beautiful lost arms could be found and fitted to her gracious figure, I feel sure they would never take the senseless pose given to the arms of the Venus of the Capitol, or to the *Vénus de Medicis*. After looking long and with satisfying fulness at the still, lovely woman in stone, I went upstairs to the picture gallery, and passing by the general favourites around which there is always a crowd, I walked on until I came to two paintings which always attract me, they hang nearly opposite to each other, and are "The Angels' Kitchen" and the "Birth of the

N

Virgin." The faces of the child-angels are bewitching, and their wings so downy you can almost feel their soft young feathers. To-morrow I mean to go to a place I have often wished to see yet never have, in spite of the many years during which off and on I have found myself in Paris, and this place is the *Conciergerie*. If ever a spot was hallowed by human suffering it is that small low room within the frowning building by the bank of the Seine, the room where Marie Antoinette lived through hours of agony. Adieu. *Amusez-vous bien, mais ne m'oubliez pas.*

CLXXXVIII

PARIS, 26th November 1858.

It is all very well, monsieur, to be sarcastic over my present state of resignation, but I ask you, what else is left me? Is it not far better to employ my time profitably by seeing things of beauty and interest than it would be to tear my hair and wring my hands in vain bewailing of my lot, and in impotent ravings against the powers that be for their appreciation of your society, and their flattering detention of your person? Be sensible; if you cannot get away from Imperial society it is no doubt my loss; but being an unavoidable one, the next best thing that I can do is to occupy my time rationally until you are able to return, and this

I propose to do. I went yesterday morning, as I told you in my last I meant going, to the prison of the *Conciergerie*, and the terrible days of the Revolution seemed to me more real than I ever felt them before. In all history there is to me no more pathetic, shudderingly horrible account than that of Marie Antoinette's cruel imprisonment and monstrous death. What mattered it to have been queen, to have had a powerful emperor for a brother, or Royal and Imperial relations, or a people who had shouted themselves hoarse at the coronation, or rank, or worldly honour, or fulsome adulation! The sufferings and humiliations of the woman's life so far outdid the joys and triumphs of the queen's, and the misery of the end was so widely disproportioned to the brilliancy of the beginning. To think of a proud delicate woman being shut up for months in that narrow cell, where even solitude was denied her, and a coarse brutal soldier was left to watch her day and night! Think of the grated bars of the window through which came a little light, but with it such ribald obscene language that the light itself heralding this additional torture must have been almost a dreaded guest. And then the mockery of the so-called trial with charges brought more terrible than death in their unnatural horror; the long suspense; the burning disgrace of the common cart with a fiend in human form seated beside the daughter of the House of

Hapsburg ; the long agonised progress through the crowded streets amid the hoots and jeers of a maddened populace ; the secret absolution falling from pitiful lips ; the place of execution saturated with the blood of hundreds ; the forsaken loneliness ; the fear, the shame, the shuddering agony of the end ! God, to think of it all to-day, after long years have passed, makes one tremble with grief, and pity, and amazement at the hellish cruelty of it all. France more than any country upon earth is surely the most ungrateful, the most forgetful of its own promises. The people shout *Vive le Roi !* with no greater enthusiasm than they will cry a little later *à bas la Monarchie !* and they hail a Republic with the same eagerness that they have shown before in acclaiming an emperor. "Unstable as water, thou shalt not succeed," was, I am convinced, spoken centuries ago as the rightful motto for the French nation. I have no patience with them as a nation, all my kindly feeling goes to one and one only of the race. Poor Marie Antoinette had better never have played at dairymaid in *Le petit Trianon*, or lent her beauty to grace the royal festivals at Versailles, when only the ghastly scaffold in the wide Place de la Concorde was to be the end. Does the Empress Eugénie, I wonder, ever tremble as she looks out over the Tuileries gardens at the accursed spot, or query whether the day may yet come when she too shall gaze upon a sea of

angry human faces, or fly from the execrations of an enraged Paris multitude? I should think it would be a trifle alarming even in these later days to mount a throne in France.

Montalembert has been condemned to six months' imprisonment, and a fine of three thousand francs, for an article comparing the government of France unfavourably with that of England. *Le Correspondant* was the journal in which the article appeared.

Your account of the temperature in which you pass your days at Compiègne is uncomfortable; do be careful, and do not come back all knocked up with the extreme sudden changes in which you seem to indulge. Are they not tired of you, the emperor and empress? Do be a little disagreeable and be sent away!

CLXXXIX

PARIS, *New Year's Day*, 1859.

The two books came safely. I can quite believe how you were hurried before leaving, but am thankful that we had at least one long happy day ere you took your departure. "He only is rich who owns the day," is a sentence I came across some time ago in some miscellaneous reading, and very rich I feel even at the remembrance of this day, which I did indeed own, wholly and entirely. What an extraordinary custom this is in Paris of allowing the

beggars free liberty to infest the streets on New Year's Day. I went to Nôtre Dame this morning, where the music was unusually good, but my patience was sorely tried during the walk there by the ceaseless application for *sous*, and coming back I took a *fiacre* to avoid the nuisance. We walked for some time along the Boulevards last night to see the temporary booths. What rubbish they sell at them, but I suppose the people are amused and would not think it the *jour de l'an*, if both booths and rubbish were not there. May every good and blessing come to you with 1859, health, wealth, happiness, and love. But no, I would not have that latter come to you, love, because it is yours already ; I would only have it grow and strengthen in faith and truth and loyalty ; I would have you to say to me *Amigo de mi alma* in the years to come, as you have said it in the years that are gone. Your idea of our going together to Florence next winter is more than tempting. If I am to catch the post in order that you may get this at Marseilles before going on to Cannes I must stop writing and send my letter at once. *Pas adieu, mais au revoir.*

CXC

PARIS,

Tuesday, 12th January 1859.

It was delightful to read in your letter from Cannes of the sunshine you are enjoying there,

for here it is the dreariest of dreary winter weather, and I am very thankful that you and your throat are well out of it. The books I chose with all possible care, being doubly particular with those destined for Mademoiselle Olga, so I am very glad that she liked her share of them. The *Mémoires de la Margrave de Baireuth* I have read, but not those of Catherine II of Russia, and I shall be glad to have them when you return. It is a horrid nuisance about your servant ; I wish you could find a good English valet. Before you leave Cannes I will send you a list of the vases, shapes and colours, that I want you to get for me in the Valauries pottery. Remind me of this should I forget it. To-night I am going to a ball at the Tuileries.

CXCII

PARIS, 27th January.

I have read the *Dictionnaire du Mobilier de Viollet-le-Duc* which you sent in your last letter, but like it only indifferently well. There are ideas, certainly, but you write less in your usual style, and rather as though you were not thoroughly in sympathy with your subject. My criticism may be unjust, but there it is ; this is the way in which the work strikes me. By what date are you obliged to have the article

on Prescott's *Philip II* ready for the *Revue des Deux Mondes*? That I feel sure I shall like. Your empress looked quite lovely at the Tuileries ball of the 12th. She wore a gown of pale rose colour trimmed with chocolate brown, and as jewels, the diamonds given by the city of Paris. The crush was something awful, and every one was talking of an almost certain war.

CXCII

PARIS, 23d March 1859.

To think that I shall see you back here again to-morrow! It seems almost too good news to be true. I have just finished the review of Prescott's *Philip II*, and liked it immensely; but will tell you all I think of it in person. Reports as to the chances of war are so contradictory that I hardly know what to write to you as the opinion here. In case you may not have seen this morning's *Moniteur* I copy its official announcement for your benefit:—"La Russie a proposé la réunion d'un congrès en vue de prévenir les complications que l'état de l'Italie pourrait faire surgir et qui seraient de nature à troubler le repos de l'Europe.

"Ce congrès composé de plénipotentiaires de la France, de l'Autriche, de l'Angleterre, de la Prusse et de la Russie, se réunirait dans une ville neutre.

“Le Gouvernement de l'Empereur a adhéré à la proposition du cabinet de St. Pétersbourg. Les cabinets de Londres, de Vienne et de Berlin n'ont pas encore répondu officiellement.”

God grant that they may answer favourably, and that the war with Italy may not be. My brother would of course be obliged to go with the army, and I cannot think of that without dread.

CXCIII

PARIS, 23d April 1859.

Is it not terrible, this news of certain war with Italy? My poor brother is off directly. The word poor is hardly the right one to use, or any expression denoting pity, for he is delighted at the prospect of some fighting, and would not if he had the chance be anything but a soldier. To me the very name of war is terrible, being synonymous as it is with suffering and misery and death. I once saw a regiment march off to join an army, the men all well and strong, full of hope and eager for the fray, confident of victory and certain of glory, inspiring with their own courage and enthusiasm the wives and children and friends gathered to bid them God-speed; later I saw that same regiment return, all that was left of it; and I watched the faces of the widows and the fatherless and the desolate as they scanned each

tired, wounded, travel-stained man only to find that the ones they sought were among the missing. In presence of their grief even those who had returned, and those happy ones who had found their own again, were sombre and silent. The contrast between the gay, hopeful going forth and the sorry coming back was too strong, and meant too much.

Tell me if you think this war will be of long duration. Is it possible as yet to know anything in regard to it? I thought I should have heard from you to-day before now, and I fancy each bell that rings brings news of you, for you will not have forgotten that I leave for Turin early to-morrow. I must see my brother before he goes, but it is with a heavy heart that I leave on such a mission. Good-bye at any time is to me the saddest of words, but at a time like this it is doubly hard to say.

(Letters missing from CXCIV to CC inclusive.)

CCI

—, 20th July 1859.

Oh, *mon ami*, if you could know the relief I feel at the declaration of peace and the safety of my brother! I know how remiss I have been during all this time of excitement in not sending you anything that could by the wildest

stretch of the imagination be termed a letter ; my hurried communications have been such mere scraps, and so few and far between, that I wonder at your loving patience in answering them as you have done. Your long letters with the latest news of the progress of the war from a Paris standpoint have been my greatest comfort during the past three months, when I have had my sister-in-law's fears to calm as well as my own. Now the reaction has come after the long and trying suspense, I feel wildly gay, ready for anything, equal to most things. The discourse of the emperor at St. Cloud yesterday I find both noble and good, and devoutly do I trust that his last words, "*Le repos de l'Europe*," represent *un fait accompli* ! A good many people one knows are here, and society is becoming quite dissipated after its forced seclusion. Why do you stop on in Paris so late ? I hear that it is very warm there, and I cannot think it good for you to run the risk of extreme heat when you continue to complain of sleeplessness and want of appetite. Write me your plans.

CCII

—, 26th July 1859.

Yours of the 21st has this instant reached me. Are you quite mad to remain on in Paris feeling as ill as you do ? Leave at once, I

entreat you, or if you insist upon staying there, and would like me to come on, I will do so. The tone of your letter is so depressed it has given me an attack of blue devils, and quite spoiled for me an expedition to which I had been looking forward with great pleasure. A party of six, including myself, are to go up the mountains on mules to-morrow afternoon, after it grows cool, spend the night at a little sort of shed on the top mountain, and see the sun rise the next morning. A couple of servants are to precede us with two extra mules laden with creature comforts in the form of bedding, food, etc., as the native accommodations are of the roughest. Could you only be of the party the expedition would be perfect, as it is, not only shall I miss you—that I should have done in all cases—but now since hearing how miserable you are my pleasure will be tempered down to a very mild degree indeed. I will, however, write you an account of the excursion should anything of interest occur. Adieu.

CCIII

—, 5th August.

The mountain trip was most successful, and just as I was preparing to write to you about it, and tell you the story of a peasant girl we met, and in whom we became much interested,

your letter of the 30th arrived. You are quite correct in your imaginings about me ; I am terribly sun-burned, and I regret to be obliged to confess that I have grown fatter ! However, with your written promise before me that no matter what changes have come to me you will still be charmed to see me, and that I may count upon being treated with great tenderness, I feel equal to any confession. Ah, *mon ami*, what strength is given by a great love and a boundless trust between two human beings ! It places in one's heart a little fortress which outside influences assail in vain, and which is so securely stored with faith and confidence as ammunition, and assured affection as provisions, that no siege can weaken it, no attack prove dangerous. Do not be so depressed about yourself, and do in pity give yourself a holiday. Come and see me here, and get a little of this life-giving air into your lungs ; I venture to say you would feel better within an hour after your arrival. And now I must tell you about our peasant girl, the beautiful pale contadina whom Lady M—— and I have adopted as a protégée.

Mazetti Marco, the miller, was the richest man in the Commune of C——, and all the young men for miles around knew that the dark-eyed Rosina, the miller's only child, would have fifteen hundred francs ; some of the village gossips even went so far as to whisper two

thousand francs, as her marriage portion. This, added to the girl's beauty, made Rosina much sought after by the young men, and terribly envied by the young women, yet so sweet and lovable was the girl that even Betta Caproni, whose envy came very near to hatred, dared not openly say a word against the miller's daughter, who was beloved by the whole Commune. Rosina's greatest charm was the deep soft red colour which was like her name-flower, the rose, and which came and went in her cheeks at every changing mood ; deepening at affectionate words, or paling with sympathy when a child was hurt, or a neighbour ill, or even if her little dog Rita hurt its foot and whined. For several years the girl Betta had loved a young contadino called Angelo, a fine strapping fellow who could sing and dance, and was always the gayest youth at a *festa*, and who could make love, so the gossips declared, faster than he could work to get an honest living. After a fashion of his own Angelo returned Betta's fierce love, which, truth to tell, he was half afraid of ; but on a certain feast-day he learned something which quite turned his head, and put all thoughts of Betta out of it. It was the roses in Rosina's cheeks which betrayed the secret in her heart, and told to Angelo's wondering astonishment that the miller's daughter, the pretty heiress of the Commune, did not look with any disfavour upon him as a partner for the

dance, or as her companion afterwards, when by the light of a silver summer moon the village youths and maidens wandered under the pergolas, and told in their soft Italian tongue the old old story which seems to grow young again in the telling. Old Mazetti at the mill was not overpleased when his child and his child's mother pleaded for Angelo, and said that they were sure that love for Rosina would cure him of all laziness and wildness and a few other little characteristics which were scarcely those which Mazetti had hoped to find in a son-in-law. Rosina's lovely rounded cheeks were whiter than her father had ever seen them, while he hesitated before consenting to give her Angelo as a *marito*, and he felt almost repaid for yielding against his better judgment when the roses came again, first in an uncertain flush of rosy pink, but always growing deeper and warmer in tone as the blood came back to the girl's anxious heart and leaped joyously through her veins. She was very happy as she sat under the vines with Angelo, whose black eyes burned with triumph when he thought how all the youths for miles around would envy him his good fortune in winning the miller's daughter and her fat dowry. But Betta, when the news came to her, would not believe it; she said it was a silly lie which Angelo himself would be the first to laugh at. He had promised to marry her when he got work that paid, and

he was too fine a fellow not to find work quickly.

Perhaps so, said the gossips, if he ever looked for it.

Some days passed before Betta saw Angelo, but when she did, and he told her half roughly that it was bad enough for a man to live on nothing, but no one could expect him to keep a wife, and the *bambino* heaven was sure to send, on the same, and he was tired of trying for work. The times were very hard, and soon, if all the new-fangled notions were acted on, there would be no work for any one. Betta listened in silence; she knew well enough that all he was saying in long sentences and twisted phrases could very well be put into two or three words as follows: Rosina has a dowry of fifteen hundred francs, and I need not work if I marry her. That was all; and the more roughly Angelo spoke, the more certain was Betta of one thing, which at least gave her a fierce comfort in the midst of her sudden anger—Angelo loved her better than he did Rosina; if she had the dowry, Angelo would be hers. Almost in silence Betta turned and left the man she cared for in her strong, ignorant way, but a new power seemed born within her heart, while a voice kept repeating more and more distinctly—"If I had the dowry, Angelo would be mine."

Rosina was happy, giving much in the gener-

ous simplicity of her affection, and not understanding that Angelo gave very little. And the time went on, and the gossips wagged their heads and said Mazetti Marco was a fool, and Rosina was throwing herself and her dowry away, and Betta had grown very black to look at, but no one minded the gossips. So the summer passed, and winter came on, and all the arrangements were being made ready for the marriage; only two days now, and Angelo would take Rosina for his wife, and the dowry would be surely his. The miller had been to the town where the money was kept, and brought it back with him in a stout leather bag,—this all the Commune knew,—and the feasting for the marriage was to begin the next day. There was no moon, and the night was very dark, but presently all the village was aroused by a lurid glare which reddened the heavens as though with blood, and brought out clearly the fright and terror in the people's faces as quickly they ran all in the same direction, towards the mill and the miller's home, which were wrapped in sheets of flame. Later the fright grew to ghastly horror, for although the miller's wife and daughter were safe, Mazetti Marco was only a charred and blackened form. "He had gone back for the money and could not escape!" so said all the gossips when talking together of the marriage that would never be, and the dowry that had been burned, and

the pretty heiress who was now as poor as Betta herself.

There my story comes to a natural pause, so, like the Princess Shehrzad in the *Arabian Nights*, I will postpone the ending of it until "next time." Please take an interest in poor Rosina, for you will see her if you come here, only you will find no roses in her cheeks.

CCIV

—, 16th August.

First of all will I answer your question as to what time you can come and see me. At *any* time. Choose your own date, and do not waste ink and paper in writing me nonsense about my talents for dilatory negotiations and my resemblance to Austrian diplomatists! The sooner you come the better I shall like it, for no other reason than the one you will know to be a true one, however reluctant you may be to acknowledge that fact, namely, that I long to see you; I weary for you.

And now for the end of my history of Rosina. Poor girl! from the night when she saw her father a lifeless mass of charred flesh, her home a heap of ashes, her dowry and promised husband lost to her for ever, and her mother a helpless wreck, with mind about gone from the succession of horrors she had lived

through, every tinge of colour left the cheeks of the miller's daughter, never to return. A strange, unnatural pallor overspread her face, from which the large, sad eyes looked out hopelessly at the changed life still left for her to live. A strange, new pride, too, seemed to have come to the penniless *contadina* who no longer ranked above the village girls around her, which pride had never belonged to the well-dowered maiden who was acknowledged to be above her associates. It was only a very little that those around her could offer, for the inhabitants of the Commune of C—— were terribly poor, but on all sides some gentle, kindly deed was remembered of the pretty Rosina, with the soft, deep colour like her blushing name-flowers ; and human nature is not all bad, especially when human beings are poor. But even this little the girl declined. A poor two hundred francs remained in the town where Mazetti Marco had kept his money, and with that Rosina first buried all that was left of the old man, and then bought a tiny building with two rooms, pretty enough in summer-time, when the vines twined lovingly over roof and walls, but very cold and bare in the winter days, when the little *scaldino* would be placed close to the poor, half-witted old mother, while Rosina and the dog Rita sat close together, that a little warmth and comfort might come to both. "She ought not to keep the dog

when they are so poor," the gossips said one to another, but only the girl herself and the dog knew that they would rather be hungry and be together than well fed and divided. Oh the scalding tears that fell on Rita's shaggy little yellow neck when the pale Rosina would drop the work she was trying so hard to make support them all, and would think of the little while ago when she and work were strangers, and the good old father shielded her from every ill, and Angelo her lover sat beside her under the vines. Only Rita knew, for the mother understood nothing now, and the neighbours never saw the girl save when she walked quietly but proudly among them, asking help from none, and still doing kindly acts for sick children or tired mothers. The work paid so poorly, and Rosina's fingers were cut and blistered with plaiting the reeds for the basket-makers. Of Angelo she saw nothing; she never went to the *festas*, and music and dancing were still the things which Angelo did best. He had gone back to Betta in a shy, sheepish sort of way, and was more than astonished that the girl's old fierce love seemed changed, only finding expression now in sharp speeches or harsh answers to his questions, yet, strangely enough, Angelo had never liked her so well as now. Betta herself had been very quiet all these days when so much was happening in the village, but quiet with a quietness which is

very apt to be synonymous with strength, or to indicate possession of that knowledge which is power. Twice lately she had gone away, her mother said to stay with an old uncle who had money, much money, which he sometimes thought he might leave to Betta when he died ; and each time she came back after one of these visits the girl had a new kerchief pinned around her throat, or long ear-rings, or a string of beads around her neck, which the uncle had given her. "It is very strange," the gossips said, "that we never heard of Betta's uncle before," but no one minded the gossips. One fine day a letter came to the post-office in the village for Betta's stupid old mother, who had never had a letter in her life before. Her daughter read it to her, and all the neighbours soon knew that the rich uncle was dead, and his money, nearly two thousand francs, had come to Betta ! She was the heiress now, with the fat dowry, and Rosina, with her strange, pale cheeks, wept bitter tears on Rita's neck, while the little dog looked at her with kind, wise, brown eyes, and licked her pale hands. When Angelo asked Betta to marry him he was very humble, and the girl gave him her hand as she would have thrown a dog a bone, not looking at him, but with her sullen eyes turned the other way. There was music and dancing and feasting at the wedding, and all the village came to bring good wishes to the bride, all

but the pale Rosina, who sat with the foolish mother and the dog in the little hut.

The winter came again, and life grew harder for the people of the Commune of C——; they grew poorer and poorer; only Angelo and Betta had money, and queer tales were told of the life they led. "He can buy drink now, and he beats her, and never works." This the gossips said, shaking with cold the while, all huddled together around a *scaldino* which Rosina had bought long ago when she was rich, and had given to a poor old crone bent double with the rheumatism. Heaven had sent the *bambino* which Angelo had talked of—a pretty dark-eyed baby thing, soft and dimpled and smiling, never dreaming what sort of a world it had come to. When it could just toddle on two little fat unsteady legs the end came for Angelo and Betta. He had drunk until he was more a beast than a man, and in a fit of drunken fury he stabbed her and stabbed himself, and no doctor in all the village could stop the life-blood flowing so fast away from both husband and wife. Betta's sullen eyes were growing dull, but she could speak still, and she bade those around send quickly for Rosina. When the pale face and sad eyes bent pitifully over her she roused herself and spoke quickly, there was so little time. "I took it; I vowed, with the *Diavolo* for my witness, that I would have the dowry and Angelo; I watched

the miller at dusk through the window ; I stole the two thousand francs and locked the only door through which he could escape, and the house was already in flames—I had arranged all that before. Then I kept the money quietly and went to Turin and bought the beads and kerchiefs—the mother did not know—she thought it was—really—father's brother——” The blood gushed out afresh, and Betta's dull eyes closed ; Angelo was already dead.

“*Mamma mia*,” and a wee hand pulled Rosina's dress, while the baby shouted with delight at little shaggy Rita.

Just a little of the dowry was left, and the miller's daughter bought food and clothing for the child, and took him home to the hut, where the foolish old mother crooned love songs to him, and Rita tried to catch the sunbeams for him as they fell across the red brick floor.

The priest of the village told Lady M—— the story, and now Rosina, with her sad eyes and strange paleness, lives in a pretty warm dry cottage by the great gate leading to the park in which stands this house ; and the old mother and the child and the dog are happy all day in the sunshine. You shall see them when you come.

Unlike the Princess Shehrzad's tales, my story is finished. It may interest you when you come upon too much *rabachage* in Madame

du Deffand's Letters. *Adieu, je vous embrasse
bien tendrement.* M.

CCV

—, 7th September 1859.

Sorry as I am not to see you as soon as I hoped, I am too thankful to have you get away from Paris, and to know that you are going to have change of scene and change of air, to say a word against your new plan. Only get better, rest, amuse yourself, above all *forget* that you cannot sleep or eat, and merely do both without thinking about either! I send this hurried note, as you tell me to, *chez M. le Ministre d'État, à Tarbes.*

CCVI

—, 18th September.

A la bonne heure ! vous voilà almost yourself again after this little short trip to the Pyrenees, what will you not be should you take a longer voyage? Had I not promised Lady M—— to stay with her until she is ready to come to Paris, I would leave for that place to-day, so much do I want to see you now that "Richard is himself again."

CCVII

PARIS, 15th October 1859.

The agitation among the clergy seems to be increasing, and the Bishops of Orleans and Bordeaux have both addressed discourses to the emperor, the former being very violent. Have you seen them? The Cardinal Archbishop among other things reminded his Majesty of what he had formerly said—" *La souveraineté temporelle du Chef vénérable de l'Eglise est intimement liée à l'éclat du Catholicisme, à la Liberté et à l'Indépendance de l'Italie.*"

By post to-day I send you a little souvenir which you will, I hope, find useful during your journeyings. Once more I envy you for being in Madrid—a place I have never yet been able to reach. Adieu.

CCVIII

PARIS, New Year's Eve, 1860.

Anniversaries are not thoroughly pleasant things, are they? They remind one of too many undertakings left unfinished, too many good resolutions broken; and they define too clearly the widening gaps in life never again to be filled, the circle of friends narrowing with such piteous speed and certainty. No, most distinctly I do not like anniversaries,—let us

ignore the fact that this is one. There is little news, and the weather is vile ; I feel stupid ; it is the night of nights for reminiscences, and as I refuse to indulge in them, I had far better leave you a fair white unwritten page than try and make conversation when the one subject I could most eloquently converse upon is *streng verboten*. I have sent the books, *et j'attends une prompte réponse*.

CCIX

PARIS, 9th January 1860.

What a Satanic little story is this which you tell me of the farmer near Grasse who sent his objectionable neighbour to a better world merely by pronouncing a few mystic words over three needles boiling in a pot ! I know several people whom with the greatest disinterestedness I would cheerfully so aid in exchanging the troubles and trials of this life for the joys of an unknown state, were it not for fear of consequences. Your farmer apparently lives on unharmed, I suppose because no one really believes that the spells he invoked killed the neighbour, which proves that it is not things themselves which matter, only the opinion other people have of them. It was a bad day to tell me such a tale, so wicked do I feel. If some one would only do something to put me into a passion it would be all right, I could

then expend my cerebral agitations upon a legitimate object ; as it is, I shall probably do much harm in a self-controlled and ladylike way, making victims of innocent fellow-beings. To relieve you of the embarrassment of a limited selection of moral literature for presentation to your young friends in coming years, I might offer to write some books myself, were it not for the remark an Irishman once made to me, that he verily believed if I ever did write a book it would be so improper my friends would refuse to let me read it !

Yes, I gave the choice in my selection to "Olga," as you requested, without asking why you so particularly distinguished her. This want of curiosity upon my part probably passed unnoticed, as so many of my good qualities seem to pass. Be careful when you go to Grasse on Tuesday next ; the monuments *de toute sorte* are not worth any extra fatigue, and you confess that the sun at Cannes and the surrounding country is treacherous. You once suggested that our letters might one day be published, in mercy to a future reading public I hasten to close this one. Adieu. M.

CCX

PARIS, 30th January 1860.

Your comparison of the emperor with the shepherds of the Middle Ages who made wolves

dance to the music of a magic flute is not bad. He is a wonderful man ; he pipes a certain tune and the workmen apply themselves heart and soul to widening streets instead of barricading them ; he changes the note and the journalists sing his praises instead of deriding his policy ; and with all classes it is the same, his shrewdness in his dealings with foreign powers calls forth commendation from statesmen ; his urbanity delights those called to counsel with him ; his social gifts charm the brilliant crowds thronging the entertainments at the Tuileries, and with it all he is a dreamer. A wonderfully practical dreamer if you will, but still a dreamer. You will see it and believe it one day, *mon ami*, perhaps too late.—I can quite credit the fact that if they did name all the members of the sacred college it would be to you "*fort égal*," providing you were not obliged to listen to their sermons, because, *ami infiniment cher*, you are not pious. It is with regret that I write the words, they are so painfully true. Were you so, even in the most superficial sense, you would remember the *fête* of la Sainte Eulalie, which, I feel convinced, you have forgotten. Do you not know that it comes on the 11th or 12th ? Shall I get something pretty in the way of Byzantine jewellery, for your cousin, and send it to you ?

I am engrossed in politics ; they alternately bewilder and amuse me, they, being quite

strictly interpreted, standing for politicians rather than politics proper. One, at least an humble-minded woman like myself with a proper reverence for the sterner sex, has such an exalted opinion of a male mortal who undertakes in whatever form to reform and regenerate mankind ; I look for something so much nobler than the mere ordinary man, with aims all pure and efforts all disinterested, and what I find bewilders me. Then I come closer and gravely investigate, and my discoveries turn the bewilderment to amusement. You will probably call this silly, but so much that I write must, from your standpoint, be more than silly. Do you know, I find it a great proof of your affection for me that you can endure so much nonsense from me, and when I stop to think seriously of the matter I am amazed that I dare write to you, not only as I do, but at all. Reflection, however, reminds me that I have so long now been your *ami féminin*, and that relationship solves so many wonderings. You ask me when my *fête* comes ; I have none. You ask my name, is it not *L'Inconnue* ?

CCXI

PARIS, 17th February 1860.

Do you remember the maxim which Madame de Sévigné says in a letter to her daughter that

she made off-hand, and liked so well she fancied she had taken it from M. de la Rochefoucauld ? It was, if I mistake not, "Ingratitude begets reproach, as acknowledgment begets new favours."

You were so grateful for my offer to help you safely over the *fête* of Sainte Eulalie and its accompanying gift, that I hasten to send a Byzantine clasp, which will, I think, *faire votre affaire*. Let me know if you receive it safely. It complies tolerably well with all your conditions, is not too modern or too *voyante*, has the air of costing more than I paid for it, and has not given me any trouble at all. Am I comprehensive, do I reply as categorically as the neat little numbers in your letter would suggest, are you satisfied with me so far as executing commissions goes ? If so, I have not lived in vain.

M.

CCXII

PARIS, 29th February.

'Tis good to be alive to-day, for the spring has come to peep at us behind the skirts of winter, and kissed her hands to us while the cold and sleet and snow were for a moment off duty. The little feathered lovers in the trees are as open in their wooing as though leafy foliage screened their indiscreet confessions, instead of bare brown branches holding them up

to the derision of pessimists and cynics. Their chirpings and twitterings are all perfectly clear to me, while they know that I sympathise with them, and by the very way in which they turn their heads to one side and look at me with bright, round eyes, I understand that they wish me well because of my sympathy. They are glad, as I am, that spring is coming soon to stay, and with it birds and travellers from the south; birds for them to twitter to, and one dear traveller for me to welcome home again. Do be careful not to overtire yourself on the journey.

I have at one and the same time been told a most exciting secret, and been bound over to keep the peace by not divulging it. For a daughter of Eve this is trying. Of course I mean to keep the solemn promises so solemnly made that I will never, *never* repeat what I have heard, so do not ask me to share my knowledge with you. Personally I have a theory that a secret is safe only when known to three persons two of whom are dead, but really, I do mean to try and keep this particular one inviolate. I direct this to Marseilles, *poste restante*, as you tell me to, and I live for the first week in March. What a great thing it is to be happy, everything is then so possible. *À bientôt.*

CCXIII

LONDON, 1st April 1860.

It was just as well for me that I saw so much of you in Paris, as the agreeable remembrance of having done so may enable me to survive the *ennuies* I suffer here. I have been independent too long to live in other people's houses when the people are relations, and when those relations have valued old family servants to whom they are bound to show consideration. Such an one is at the present time turning a fairly comfortable world into a very unenviable place as a residence, and rapidly converting an amiably-inclined individual (myself) into an irritable, distracted, and distracting specimen of outraged human nature. Write to me quickly, one of your long amusing letters, tell me of your dinners and balls and something enlivening, that I may be able to endure this compulsory visit of one whole month to uncongenial people. I would send you a *poisson d'Avril* did such things exist in London, but they do not; no one gives pretty or amusing presents on the 1st of April, they only sometimes perpetrate very stupid jokes. My April joke is to find myself where I am, and the proportions of it will last me for some time to come. You see I am diabolically cross, but I ask you how, under the circumstances, could I be anything else? You in Paris well, cheerful,

and amusing yourself; I in London bound to consult the fancies and prejudices of a narrow-minded old aunt and four spinster cousins. Just why I allow myself to be so imposed upon is what puzzles your most moral and conservative

M.

CCXIV

LONDON, 7th April 1860.

Ah, why did I come here! The springlike weather makes me long for our woods, and your letter is too cheerful; you do not miss me half enough. Alfred de Musset's words haunt me—

“Le temps emporte sur son aile
Et le printemps et l'Hirondelle,
Et la vie et les jours perdus.”

I will not quote the last line of the verse; it would be equally untrue and ungrateful. But write to me.

CCXV

(Letter missing)

CCXVI

LONDON, 5th May.

There is but one drawback in reading your letters, I so dread coming to the end of them.

P

The last, telling of the ball at the Hôtel d'Albe, was delightful ; how good of you to spare so much time for the details which you knew would delight my feminine heart. If *you* found the women *décolletées d'une façon outrageuse*, it must have been a trifle strong for the rest of humanity. The fashion has not yet crossed the Channel ; we are still very decent here, if not a trifle prudish. It often strikes me as odd that so narrow a stretch of water should separate such entirely different customs, manners, and moralities in the two nations of England and France. Even the shape of a Paris bonnet is modified before it pleases the London beauty, and a roomful of English *grande dames* will demurely look down their noses at a *risqué* French story which would merely make their *piquante* neighbours across the stream laugh heartily ; and yet human nature is terribly alike wherever it exists. *Au fond*, we are not one bit more moral than you, only we are taught "properer manners," as my old nurse used to say. I have no equivalent exchange for your Paris scandals, although I rejoice to say that my visit to the aunts and cousins is over, safely over too, for which I take no small credit to myself. I allowed my digestion to be thoroughly upset once a week by having the hour of every meal changed, and eating a cold meat dinner in the middle of the day on Sundays. I forbore to mention your name, or

to dwell upon the little differences between foreign and English life. I came down to breakfast punctually ; read my letters stolidly under fire of ten pairs of inquisitive eyes who darted silent disapprobation at the foreign stamps and thin paper ; in short, by the miraculous aid of a kind Providence, I lived through a month of the 'dullest possible existence, formed of narrow respectability and respectable narrowness as regards life in its every phase. Now I breathe again, and the world seems alive once more. You will smile when you learn what kept me from absolute collapse during my duty visit ; it was an almost daily stroll to that grand silent resting-place of the dead and shrine of worship for the living—beautiful, shadowy, dreamy Westminster Abbey. You see I was careful to seek out no worldly acquaintances during my penitential retreat at the aunt's, who is a kind old soul after all said and done ; therefore much spare time remained upon my hands, and I employed it in wandering through the Poets' Corner and reading the names of those glorious gifted ones who have sung of joy and sorrow, love and death, touching men's hearts to quick sympathy and soothing many an hour of pain or weariness. To write something that will live after one ! To pen even a few words which, whenever read, must bring a throb of restful pleasure to a human heart, that may help one child of earth

amid the endless grind of earthly toil ; is this not ambition well employed ? You who are doing all this, do you not feel glad that it has been given you to do ? From where the poets lie in the old Abbey it is not far to the tombs of kings and queens with heads uncrowned by death and laid low as any common commoner. Mere worldly greatness does not seem to me one-half so worth the having as greatness of mind and soul, yet see the crowd cheer and hail the one while the other is worshipped only by a few. And when *tout le monde* approves, why, it is much, it is everything ; one is always fool enough to be governed by public opinion. If we are ever in London together, you and I, you must come with me to Westminster Abbey and explain it to me architecturally, for I regret to say I am painfully ignorant of the very first principles of architecture. I love the place, and love to ramble along its aisles and its quiet corners, to look far up among the arches and listen to the organ's peal rolling through the building from corner to corner and end to end ; but I love all this with sensation and feeling, not understanding—this latter you must teach me.

CCXVII

(Letter missing)

CCXVIII

LONDON, 1st July 1860.

The crossing to-day was, without exception, the worst I have ever made. It is a matter of positive amazement to me how the two nations of the earth, professing to be the most civilised and to know how to live more comfortably than their neighbours, will, year in and year out, traverse that wretched Channel in boats which could not have been worse in the dark ages, if that period of time knew anything about boats. Two hours of mortal misery to be endured every time an Englishman wishes to dine in Paris or a Frenchman proposes to visit John Bull in his tight little island; it really seems absurd. To-day the sea was rough, and a cold drizzling rain made the misery more miserable. You could take your choice of shivering on a wet windy deck or suffocating in the bad air of a musty cabin, sights and sounds ghastly in their disgusting distinctness being thrown in gratis in whichever place you elected to put yourself. A young married couple were crossing, at least they looked young and very newly married when they came on board—fresh new travelling suits to match their fresh new conjugal manners and unmistakably new-married little ways—but oh, the change as we neared the white cliffs of Dover! The hapless Marie

Stuart could not have regretted leaving her "*belle France*" more bitterly than did the poor little rumpled sea-sick bride, while every illusion she had ever possessed as to the personal charms of her new husband must have been shaken to their very foundations with one glance at his green woe-begone countenance from which sea-sickness had driven all the assured air of the conqueror and successful proprietor. And to think of crossing again to-morrow when I go with Lady M—— to —— by the sea, where she fancies the air will do wonders for her! London is all mud, and the season is practically over; I shall like —— better, although the place is new to me. Let me know your plans. What a passion for separation we have, considering that we are supposed to care about one another. Adieu.

CCXIX

——, 7th July 1860.

I much doubt whether the get-up of a *croque-mort* would suit you, and all men in deep mourning have a horribly suggestive appearance of undertakers, *donc*, not to see you in the funeral procession of Prince Jérôme does not bring the amount of regret with it which you seem to think it ought to. I can fancy you in other *rôles* far more to my taste than

anything so melancholy as this, and on principle I dislike interments. Remember, when I die I wish to be cremated. This I write in all seriousness. To begin with, it is clean, and I hold strongly to the belief that cleanliness is next to godliness. Then, however fair dead persons may look in that last still sleep, the knowledge that the seeds of corruption are within them is too horrible. Think of the slow decay, the rotting of flesh, the hideous change, the loathsome gnawing worm, the foul creeping, slimy things——faugh! all these give the lie to the pure pale beauty of the dead, and if life must be false, in pity let its end end the falseness; have done with shams, and look and be what it really is! So burn me when I die, that I may at least be clean and not food for worms.

CCXX

(Letter missing)

CCXXI

——, 21st July.

When you are in a rage you are so delightful that the temptation to infuriate you is almost more than I can resist. For a long long time now I have not had so charming a letter as the one lying open before me, which closes with the

words, "*Je suis vraiment de bien mauvaise humeur contre vous.*" My conscience tells me sternly that I deserve every one of your reproaches, while my vanity whispers in deliciously soothing tones, "See how he misses your letters when you fail to write—he so fears to lose them that angry as he is he tells you that you are the "*grand motif déterminant*" of all his plans, that no change of programme will be a sacrifice if it conduces to a speedy meeting with you; that he would throw over every engagement and return to Paris to-morrow if you said that you would be there. O dear vanity, how could I live without her! It was not nice of me, I confess, to neglect writing, but how often have I told you that when living with the sea I am not responsible for my actions? If we have all existed in a previous state in some other form of animal or bird or spirit, I know what I was,—a mermaid. The whole thing becomes clear to me as I write the words. I was born in a grotto below the sea, the walls of a pale shimmering green with opal lights flashing through it, the roof of branching coral, the floor fine silvery sand. Great pearls lay here and there in dreamy moonlight whiteness, and faintly-tinted grasses waved lightly near the grotto's opening. What a gay careless life it was, playing with baby wavelets and sporting in the surf, the cool spray falling on hair and eyes and lips like kisses in a dream

And in the starlight how amusing it was to mount to the world above and watch the ships go by as we sat on the rocks and sang for the tired mariners. Oh no, it was not half a bad sort of a life, that of a mermaid under the sea. No care or responsibility, no fighting between good and evil, that wearing ceaseless struggle which seems to know no end.

How can you regret an owl? What odd tastes you have in your selection of animal pets. Long ago, do you remember, in almost the first letter I ever wrote to you, I sententiously remarked that an owl which had been in your company had failed to impart its traditional wisdom to you? Oh what queer proper little letters I used to write! I feel sure that you must have smiled one of your fine cynical smiles when you read them. In those days we promised each other such amusing things; you swore never to make love to me, and gave me wise reasons to prove how impossible it was that I should find you lovable, and I treated with noble scorn your suggestions that if I married any one else I was bound to love you in the end. Do you remember?

Algiers still tempts me, and I have by no means abandoned the idea of wintering there, and I am very clear in my mind that I am not coming to England at present; on these two points you cannot say that I do not give you information. No one is quite all bad, even

I have a few redeeming points, one of which is that in spite of all your faults I love you still, as a greater mortal than I once said of England.

CCXXII

—, 5th August 1860.

Well, it is almost decided that we go to Algiers, and I am not wholly convinced that it is the best thing to do, which means that I am in a horrid state of uncertainty and am half sorry that I promised my valuable companionship for the expedition. I wish I could have helped you in selecting the dresses and bonnets, for I have no doubt that you made a fine muddle of it all, and agree with you that it is not unlikely the "dogs of France" will run after the unfortunates who are obliged to wear the garments of your unassisted choosing. *Voilà* an idea for this happy souvenir which is to remain with us after parting. . . .

Have you only just discovered that all men (not merely Englishmen) look uncommonly alike when dressed in *habits noirs* and *cravates blanches*? *Mon ami*, if you had ever asked a noble guest to get you a glass of champagne, as I once did, mistaking him for a *domestique*, you would know that this resemblance reaches confusingly far. Will no man assert himself and refuse to dress like the twin of a *garçon de*

café? Think how well you would look in velvet and point lace attired as a gentleman of the olden times, while no costume ever invented is so trying as the present regulation full dress for a man.

Surely you cannot be serious when you say that people in England speak of war and a French annexation! absurd. I send this to 18 Arlington Street, *et je vous embrasse.*

CCXXIII

(Letter missing)

CCXXIV

LESTAQUE, 12th September.

With this I send you a photograph of myself, which will make those adieux to you which it is impossible for me to make in person. I regret that we could arrange no meeting; you will think it my fault—I find it a little yours also; but we will not quarrel just as a long journey is to part us still more completely, although we have a genius for parting even if the space be small. Send me your commissions, and I will do my best to execute them in the excellent manner you yourself employ. How I should dislike you if you were not generous. There ought to be a law putting all mean men

to death—they are one of the most unseemly blots in a tolerably well regulated world. A mean woman is a pitiable sight enough, but a mean man seems to exceed it in pitiableness, he always produces upon me a sense of intense fatigue. I expect a photograph in return. Will you not please go promptly and have one taken?

CCXXV

13th September 1860.

No letters; of what are you thinking? I gave you a carefully-prepared plan of our route on purpose that there might be no danger of missing news from you, and I hear nothing; write, or I will tell you nothing. Yesterday as we drove along just as the day was falling, Madame de C—— slept, and I, wide awake, dreamed. And my dream was that I was great and famous. I had won a name that echoed far and wide, conquered a place in this overcrowded world which was pleasantly apart from the toilers and strugglers still fighting for space. With a calm restful loftiness I watched them pressing and hurrying on, some with great gaunt eyes and hollow cheeks, fiercely determined to win or to die; others beaten back and trampled down so often that each effort they made to rise was feebler than the last; and more still crushed into a stupid stolid hopelessness. The

men who spurned all these crowded to me, taking eagerly anything that I would give, grateful for the very words over which they once had cavilled and hesitated, and finally refused, a fact they now cleverly ignored. At first no child with a new toy could have been more hugely pleased than was I with this pretty plaything called success. I laughed aloud when those before whom I once had trembled, waiting anxiously for their autocratic verdict, now with deep respect waited upon my whims, and it vastly pleased me to give them that which I knew my name alone made valuable, but which they took gratefully, reverently, as though all worth and merit were enfolded in its pages. All this at first amused me, but gradually a slow contempt came for the very people whose opinion I had once highly valued and conscientiously tried to win. That which I knew to be good honest work, written with a long-ing purpose to accomplish some good in the world, to give some help to humanity, even if it were only a smile to cheer, all this had been counted as nothing worth, I had no name to stamp upon the wares offered for sale, no patent sign to attract attention and win ignorant praise. But now—how all was changed. Any worthless trash I might scribble with thoughtless haste brought me gold, and men contended which should pay the most gold to capture it, and once obtained they treated it kindly, decked

it out bravely, and stamping it with my name, my famous world-wide name, they flaunted it abroad and men hastened to share it with them, and pronounce loudly to all who would hear how wise and clever and brilliant a thing this was, this trash stamped with a name. And then I scorned myself more than the silly fools around me. After the scorn a bitter sadness came: what mattered now all this flashing notoriety and fulsome flattery from people who never cared before? Those who had lovingly followed every step I took along the thorny road to fame, who had helped me with a fond belief in me, a warm sympathy when disappointment came, a glad sincere delight at every little gleam of success, these, so many of them, were gone, and gone before they knew what the end would be. They would have cared so much, and they never knew; what did it matter now, what was the good of it all, it came so late!

Oh tell me, you who know, tell me, is this all that fame can do at the end? After years of hope and toil and strong belief and final victory, does all the warm glow and flush of success flicker and pale and fade to dull regret that it comes too late? Hot smarting tears came as we drove on in the still twilight, the utter hopelessness of it all seemed to spread over me like a pall, and weigh me down with its stifling sadness, and it seemed so real, I was so wide awake that I could hardly persuade

myself I had never struggled for fame, therefore why, in heaven's name, should gain or loss of fame disturb me? I had no wish to write for men's approval, for no man's, only one, and well I knew how kind a judgment every word I wrote for him was sure to win. And I wanted no name to stamp on anything, only the one he gave me, "*L'Inconnue*," which so long a time ago was graven on his heart. A silly, silly waking dream it was for me to dream at twilight, was it not?

CCXXVI

ALGIERS, 29th September 1860.

How can I tell you what I think of your lost letters when I have never seen them? Why, you ask a question almost as silly as my waking dream! *Décidément, mon ami*, you have lost your head as completely as the good people of Marseilles did over the sight of the emperor, and they were painfully far gone. The *fêtes* were worth seeing, and his Majesty cannot complain of any want of loyalty on the part of his Marseillais. You ask me for descriptions of what I see and my impressions of Oriental life. Where can I begin and how properly answer? I am rather bewildered with the startling contrasts of pompous splendour and feeble absurdity in the things around me. The approach to this place was a thing of perfect

beauty, for we arrived at sunrise, and the lines came at once to my mind—

“ Le soleil se levait, Alger nous apparut,
Salut terre d'Afrique, à ton beau ciel salut ! ”

As our vessel glided into the still waters of the port everything was shadowy, vague, mysterious ; slowly a pale gold light spread over sea and sky and the indistinct outlines of an amphitheatre of hills rising behind and around a silent white town, which looked in the distance like a line of foam on sand. Then a tinge of blue crept into the golden light, deepening in colour as it came, and a faint soft rose tint, which also deepened as it spread until the heavens were one refulgent glow of brilliant colour and the horizon grew more and more luminous as the god of light himself rose with slow majesty behind the Djurajura mountains. At this moment the full glory of an African sunrise was before us, bathing white Algiers as it rose from the sparkling waters in an exquisite rosy blushing light. Then came a motley crew of Arabs, Spaniards, Maltese, and Kabyles, shouting in an undistinguishable jargon of hybrid *patois*, men with dark faces and picturesque costumes, all clamouring for our goods and chattels. And oh the queer old Arab town with its modern French half that Algiers is when in spite of the polyglot confusion you at last reach it; and oh the palms, the grace-

ful Eastern palms which until now I have only seen in my dream of the desert ; and oh the plants and flowers, and orange and olive groves, and the beautiful vineyards ! I ask again how am I to describe all these ! One must see Algiers to know its perfumed beauty, its luxurious wealth of wild flowers, its pepper trees and myrtle, its great bunches of scarlet poinsettias, and fragrant waxy magnolias, its lemon trees and cypresses. If you wish warm, fragrant, golden loveliness, you must come to Algiers, with sea in front and mountains behind and sunshine over all !

There is an immense difference in the old and the new part, the latter inhabited by the French being all excitement and bustle, gay, amusing, vivacious ; the former silent and solemn, the people self-contained, with grave sad faces, while over all falls the veil of mystery which always envelops an Eastern people. The Arab women are graceful, but in their regular features there is but little expression or soul, and a strange resemblance exists in them all. Only two distinct passions gleam from their dark eyes, love and hate, there is nothing between, no finer shades. We have already been inside a harem and seen these Eastern beauties unveiled ; poor things, what a life they must lead, it would be all hate with me if I were unlucky enough to be in their place ! But my letter is growing to an alarming length, and as

Q

I do not wish you to find it like a leaf out of
a guide-book, I will write quickly FIN.

CCXXVII

ALGIERS, 3d October 1860.

No. 5.

I still revel in all the beauty of nature and colour and picturesqueness, in this entrancing African warmth and brightness. To-day we visited the Mosque of Dja-ma-el-Djedid. Do you find the name musical? A commoner way of calling it is the Mosque of the Pêcherie. It is dazzlingly white, and oddly enough is built in the form of a Latin Cross. To explain this there is a legend telling that the designer of the building was a Genoese, a Christian slave who was forced by the Moslems to work. He revenged himself for their cruelty by an ingenious device, namely, the manner in which he designed this building, perpetrating in the Mahomedan temple the symbol of his own Christian faith. When the Mussulmen discovered in what fashion he had carried out their orders they were furious, and put him to a hideously cruel death by impalement.

Some of the Moorish houses here are the most luxurious and shadowy bits of seclusion, with cool open courts shaded by vines or ivy which is trained up the sides of the building. In these courts you see the dwellers in the

house sitting on soft carpets, and splashing bare naked feet in the fountain which drips ceaselessly with a soothing monotony. But few of the windows of the houses open on the streets, and these few are jealously defended by bars and close gratings. There are quantities of Jews in the place, and some of the Jewish women are lovely. Their ordinary dress is a simple blue, or brown, or green garment confined under the breast with a girdle, while their long black hair is held together with circlets of silver or gold, or merely a simple ribbon. Their arms and feet are bare, and are sometimes very beautiful. We have seen some of the curious Eastern dances, where the women move their bodies entirely from the hips downward, and we often hear the Arab girls singing as they accompany themselves on a mandoline. More guide-book! I fear you will exclaim after reading this letter, but you so constantly tell me to describe all that I see, and you become so abusive, and clamour so for details when I am not particular enough in my descriptions, that I feel I must risk the charge of copying from Baedeker. Is not the poor empress terribly distressed at the death of the Duchess d'Albe? How sad it was. Will the parties at Compiègne be given up this year? I hope not, as I know how much you always enjoy them. Could you only be with me on these "shining sands of Africa's shore" I should be quite quite happy.

CCXXVIII

ALGIERS, 15th October.

I once wrote you a description of a chapel in a wood where prayer was real and faith was not a dream. In quaint contrast to that quiet spot and the simple worship practised there, yet at once recalling it, is another tiny chapel of an older faith, standing in a deserted garden, amidst a wild luxuriance of foliage and Eastern flowers, in this far-away land, in which a worship of signs and gorgeous symbols was once practised. We came upon it suddenly when going from Algiers along the sea-road to the village of St. Eugène, and immediately the contrast between the two places of worship struck me as more than curious, not only because of the difference in them, but in their odd resemblance, both so lonely and remote ; one so bright and simple under the free dome of heaven, the other so dim and with such an old-world air inside its painted walls ; both standing in a place of leafy beauty, the one fresh and cool, the other dark, the air seeming laden with memories of the past ; both prayer-haunted, but from the one the balmy summer air seemed to have swept away all trace of unforgiven sin, while in the other, time seemed only to have accumulated the grief which sin had felt there, and piled it high until its woe

oppressed you. We had left Algiers by the north gate, Bal-el-Oned, and as we passed it we came upon a group which could a painter have transferred to canvas just as they looked at the moment, his fortune would have been made. The men, three of them, were very handsome; Moors, with pale, oval faces and stately figures. They wore a rich, embroidered dress, with a cloak gracefully draped over one shoulder, and on their heads the universal *fes* and white turban. All three stood like statues as we passed. Two Moorish women, enveloped in white draperies, were sitting near them; both of these wore the white striped shawl called *haik*, with the white linen handkerchief called *adjar* hiding all of their face save the fiery, dark eyes. Near them a Maltese sailor was disputing with a bloodthirsty-looking Spaniard in a velvet *sombrero*. The old gate, a group of palms, and the brilliant colouring of air and sky, completed the picture, which, had it hung framed on the walls of the *salon*, would have charmed all who looked upon it. But this is a land of pictures. I have already a whole gallery in my mind, which later, when I have more leisure at my command, I must ticket and number for future reference. Let us one day come to Algiers together; I begin to love it well.

Do send me some reliable information about the actual state of affairs in the political world.

We hear strange rumours here of strained relations between Russia and Austria ; and to come nearer home, of a little discontent among a few about your emperor. Perhaps this latter is nothing more than the difficulty about M. H—— and the *beaux-arts* to which you alluded in your last letter. I feel terribly remote here ; when one lives in Paris, and is accustomed to hearing all the daily details of such things, one rather misses them when absent. Write me one of your long, comprehensive letters, full of men and things.

CCXXIX

ALGIERS, 25th October.

No. 7.

I am studying Arabic. It appears frightfully difficult, but I hope in time to conquer it as I did German. I do so ardently wish to be able to converse with these people, who quite fascinate me, and are infinitely more interesting than the French colony of which we are obliged to see more than we quite fancy. Your *tartine politique*, as I presume you yourself would designate your last letter, was delightful. I feel quite myself again, and *au courant* with the affairs of all nations. Did ever a woman have such a correspondent before ? that is the

question I ask myself after reading your letters, which surely are the best ever written. You make me smile with your absurd insistence that I should give you fuller and still fuller descriptions of what I see here. "Donnez-moi des détails de mœurs et n'ayez pas peur de me scandaliser." This is the *motif* of your every letter now, and it is growing quite monotonous. Know then, once for all, that in spite of what you are pleased to term my *euphémisme*, I distinctly refuse to enlighten you as to a good many of the details of the manners in this part of the world lest they might not improve your own. We have just come in from a visit to the market in the Place de Chartres under the arcades, and have also been up to the Casabah, which was the former residence of the Dey. It is not a particularly cheerful spot, and has high, battlemented walls around the place; but one thing is higher still, and is moreover very beautiful—this is a palm, the tree of my predilection. It rears its lofty, graceful head high up against the sky, and stands so fair and slim, with a dreamy Eastern loveliness which I find in no other tree that I have ever seen, and which appeals to something deep down in my heart, just what I am perfectly incapable of explaining; I only know that I love a palm, and I think of Heine's lonely pine-tree in the North, sleeping under its white covering of ice and snow, and dreaming of

“ . . . einer Palme
Die fern im Morgenland ;”

is lonely, and silent, and grieved, amid burning rocky cliffs. Beautiful as it is, there is something almost pathetic in a palm. Near this particular one to-day an Arab spread his carpet, and throwing himself on his knees, bent his head to the earth as he heard the call to prayer. He had the dull, uninterested expression of his race—the look of a fatalist, who accepts all that comes, and with bowed head and total lack of interest repeats at every blow of fate, “The will of Allah be done.” Adieu, *cher ami*, I am not a fatalist ; are you ?

CCXXX

(Letter missing)

CCXXXI

ALGIERS, 5th December.

“*Je vous apporte ma tête coupable !*” as you tell me, in your letter of 1st November, the Emperor Francis Joseph said to the Emperor Alexander. If this is in reality the form of speech used by a serf when he approaches his master, fearing to be punished by him, it is an apt one for me to employ, for I know how

guiltily remiss I have been lately in not writing and not acknowledging your two long and very charming letters. That I did not do so is no proof that I did not to the fullest extent appreciate your epistles, I enjoyed every word of them, but this African climate must be responsible for my remissness; I am growing lazy with a laziness that would alarm me were I not too lazy even to feel afraid. How kind of you to think of sending me the little package, I shall value it highly. I look through your two last letters as I write, to see if any questions in them need answering. You were quite right as to the address of the jeweller, it was Rue d'Alger, No. 10, where I bought the sleeve buttons. How amusing that the Princess Clotilde should notice them. You are not particularly encouraging about the Arabic, but I mean to persevere; how droll it would be if I could speak in a tongue unknown to you! I promise not to abuse my superior knowledge; I will not call you "dog of a Christian" at the very moment you are particularly generous to me, as these Arabs do when we give them small coins, hurling their contemptuous phrases at us with impunity, as they know we cannot understand a word they say.

Yes, poor Lady M—— did once write a book, a novel, but it never had any success, and it was not a subject she cared to dwell much upon later in life. She was one of several

warnings to me not to perpetrate a similar folly. I shall miss the old lady very sincerely ; she was a good friend up to the day of her death, and you know my idea as to friends, I prefer quality rather than quantity as their characteristic. A few, but those few very staunch and true, are better than half a hundred feeble half-hearted ones who blow hot and cold according to the social thermometer of the day. In the way of literature, I think you might find something better worth reading than the story of Mademoiselle Can and Mademoiselle Ling. If that is the best the Chinese can do, France will not gain much from these much-talked-of victories in China. The Celestials have never interested me, they are so little original, and originality appeals to me so very strongly. What was really the real reason of the empress's visit to Scotland ? Is it personal friendship for the Queen of England, or does it conceal a political meaning ? On all sides I hear different motives assigned as an explanation of the journey, and if you will confide the truth to me I will not betray your confidence ; I shall only have the delightful satisfaction of knowing what all the world does not know, which is, I think, one of the most pleasantly-soothing sensations in life. You will insist upon hearing particulars of Algerian customs, here is one spicy one for you.

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CCXXXII

ALGIERS, 10th December 1860.

So I do not acquit myself well in my rôle of *voyageuse*. I am very sorry, but what more or what less can I do to improve matters? I tell you of what I see (not quite all of it perhaps) in the best language I know how to command; I give you a little bit of everything, sunrise, costumes, floral vegetation, descriptions of all kinds, to say nothing of my thoughts, and ambitions, and even my dreams. When I sum up all this, I find you a trifle unreasonable, for, on the whole, I think I might do worse. When a man grows to have an *idée fixe* which nothing can turn to the right or to the left, naturally, he can see and appreciate nothing which does not in some way appertain to that idea. Might this not perhaps be your present case? I merely suggest the thought without the slightest *arrière pensée*. By a friend going directly to Cannes I send you a little souvenir worked with some rather good gold and coloured embroidery; just what it is I can hardly say, you might perhaps use it as a purse, or merely let it lie as a fine bit of delicate colour on your table with the "relics"; try the effect. Write to me but do not scold me; strive for a more contented and less inquisitive disposition, and leave the natives of this land and any little

peculiarities which they may possess in an undisturbed peace. *Votre amie dévouée.*

CCXXXIII

ALGIERS, 7th January 1861.

I will answer your question at once about the *sacoches*. They are to be had here, they do come from Constantine, and they are marvellously embroidered with silks of every shade. Shall I get you some? Further, there are most lovely stuffs and soft silken draperies, and a curious thing they call a *gebira*, a kind of case or bag worked and inlaid with gold inside and out. I will get you any or all of these things if you will deign to let me know your pleasure in the matter. It will be too late to catch the post to-day if I write one line more, so I will not delay the above information, but close this fragment of a letter at once with every loyal loving wish for the New Year upon which we are entering; may it bring you only good.

CCXXXIV

ALGIERS, 30th January 1861.

Nizza la bella was a name so suited to the place that I cannot share your enthusiasm in finding it changed to Nice, a French annexation.

although the absence of custom-house officers, gendarmes and passports on the Pont de Var must be a vast improvement. I am so glad that you have been to see your friend Mr. Ellice at Nice, as I know your mutual admiration for each other. If you decide to leave Cannes about the 8th of February I will begin to think of tearing myself away from my beloved palms and the sad-faced Arabs, that we may meet again after this long separation. Perhaps I may tell you some of the things you so much wish to know, and which I declined to put on paper; but this only if I find you very amiable, and if we meet soon while the "details" are fresh in my mind.

CCXXXV

ALGIERS, 10th March.

Really, that you should still need me to remind you of your cousin's *fête* and the annual *étrennes* for Madame Lagrené's daughters after all these years is *un peu fort*; I believe you merely say so to permit of my feeling the pleasantness of being a necessity to you. I accept the subtle flattery, and repay it with the announcement that I have just the very thing for your cousin, whom you can assure that only the fact of my negligence in sending it earlier prevented her receiving it in time. For the books I fear you will have to make your own

excuses, unless you would like me to send you a few copies of the Koran!

I am to meet the Duchess of Malakof to-night at dinner, and will with pleasure speak of you and the theatricals in Spain; it will be a capital opening subject of conversation. I am tired with a long walk in the sun, therefore you must forgive a short letter. Adieu.

CCXXXVI

—, 29th March 1861.

Your last letter proved you to be in such an infamous temper against all men and things that I feared your health might become seriously affected through nervous agitation, and I at the same time decided that this eternal saying of adieu is not just the most profitable occupation that we can indulge in. From this decision to a steamer bound for France was but a step, and *me voici*, a little browner perhaps than when you saw me last—you would never believe that I had been to Africa were not this the case—but neither fatter nor thinner, therefore you will have small difficulty in recognising me. I think you will like the *gebira*,—it is rather a good one. We shall quarrel delightfully over Wagner's music; I like it, while you have evidently nearly died under it; and you will see *Tannhäuser* will yet be a success, in

spite of Auber and the Princess of Metternich and your irascible self. I must remain here for a short time, that I may get my affairs into some sort of order after so long an absence, and then I propose seeing Paris and yourself once more. With this hope strong within me I write no more adieu, but with much pleasure *au revoir*.

(Letters inclusive from CCXXXVII to CCXL missing.)

CCXLI

N—,

Thursday, 13th June 1861.

Have you ever had a moment of such complete aberration of intellect that in it you have done a thing which had the greatest fool of your acquaintance done you would be convinced that he was attacked with a sudden access of folly? Have you ever, during this same space of mental aberration, literally held within your hand an object most difficult to get, and which only by the greatest care and skill you have succeeded in obtaining, and then, always at this critical moment of the suspension of every faculty tinged with reason or common sense, have you allowed this ardently-desired and dearly-bought object to slip from your grasp? One moment will do it, and another

moment will make you aware that you have done it, while in the two moments combined the object so hardly won has escaped you, it may be for ever, and you have only yourself to thank for your loss.

If you have ever suffered from a spasm of lunacy such as this, perhaps you will kindly tell me what you did to yourself by way of punishment. I am literally suffocating with rage against myself, and would willingly perform any act of self-abasement if it would effectually prevent me from a second attack upon any future occasion of this same momentary insanity. I can fancy being able to apply a good many things which might be of salutary effect were the delinquent any one but myself, but I can find nothing sharp enough or efficacious enough to meet such a case when it becomes personal. The whole story of the *sottise* which I have committed is too long to tell ; it may or may not be fatal to the ultimate design which I contemplated, but its immediate consequence is that I am obliged to stop on here indefinitely, and in spite of my *au revoir* I shall not be able to come to Paris or to meet you just yet. *En revanche* I send you a cigar-case which I had hoped to give you in person. Write to me, if you can do so after what I have just told you, as if I were still a reasonable being, instead of what I feel myself to be, the most imbecile idiot ever allowed to go at large !

CCXLII

N—, 12th July 1861.

When I tell you that the domestic event in my sister-in-law's family is still awaited with no little anxiety you will understand why I have not written as regularly as usual. I devoutly hope that everything will soon be satisfactorily over, for this state of suspense is getting on my nerves, and the responsibility of the entertainment is, *malgré moi*, thrust upon me. If you have any moments left between the dinners and balls with which your time in London is doubtless almost entirely taken up, do write me something amusing; I am bored to death, as I was never intended for a *garde-malade*.

CCXLIII

(Letter missing)

CCXLIV

N—, 17th August 1861.

My next letter will be from D—, as we are just off—at least the children and I are—to that place; my sister-in-law is recovering very slowly, and will remain here for some time longer. Your account of the Bank of England

R

made me feel quite avaricious of so much gold. I have once or twice passed it—the Bank, not the gold—when I had business calling me into the City, and have been amused at the magnificence of the porter at the door, with his trimming of gold lace and his imposing hat ; farther than the door I have never penetrated.

So this time Mr. Gladstone pleases you more ; for me he is a wonderful man who will go far. I meant to tell you another story of Lord B——, more amusing still than the one you tell in your letter of 16th July ; but I quite forgot it when I wrote, and on second thoughts I think that it will tell the better if I can personally act the dramatic portions of it, which could not be expressed on paper. Remind me to do this when we meet.

Direct your next to D——.

CCXLV

D——, *27th August 1861.*

Nonsense ! so you find that I have accustomed myself to submit to oppression, and that is why I enjoy having these children about me. Well, there are theories and theories, and the most amusing part about this particular one is that to make me submit the oppression must come from any one saving and excepting

yourself! *C'est un peu fort, par exemple*, but all the same, as I said, amusing. I delight in children, always have, and always shall. They never bore me, and I like studying the still undeveloped traits of the human animal when very small. I like to play with children and to have them about me, and I thank God from the bottom of my heart that I have none of my own! The pleasure of them is very great, but the responsibility of them is too great. To begin with, they may be so satisfactory in every way, and they may on the contrary be so miserably disappointing. If a boy, one would naturally wish him to be bright and plucky, clever at his books, a thorough little gentleman, honest and truthful, intelligent, responsive, affectionate. Fancy one's dismay should he turn out to be dull and sullen, awkward and untidy, without ambition or interest in things around him, given to a shifty sort of prevarication, unresponsive and selfish, a gloomy blot in the household instead of a bit of glad happy sunshine. If a girl, on the other hand, she should be pretty, loving and winning, with promise of future grace and accomplishments, holding strictly to truth and virtue—all of which things, by the way, the little one who so attracts me in Madame de P——'s brood is duly endowed with. Such a child is a constant delight, but were she the opposite of this, *quel malheur!* One human being less in the world

would, under those circumstances, suit me better. No, no, *mon ami*, little people to be enjoyed should suggest no personal responsibility. Who is the moralist who writes that but one woman in a hundred, at a very moderate calculation, is really fitted to be a mother? Think what the part of a conscientious mother really is. A child's soul and mind is given into her keeping—a pure white blank like a sheet of paper, easily impressed, responsive to the first words written upon it. You may later, if you will, rub out, and perhaps so far as the eye can see entirely efface, some of the original precepts and ideas traced upon the page, even successfully write others over them; but, if carefully examined, the smooth surface of the paper will be found to be scratched and roughened; you can see the blurred spot by holding it in the proper light, and beneath the second writing will be found the first, faint and colourless, but deeply marked. The ink or carbon may have been quite rubbed off, but the steel point of the pen or the weight of the pencil has imprinted indelible lines. And to whom but the mother is it given to write these first teachings upon the little white soul, the little blank heart and understanding; and among the many mothers how few, how terrifyingly few, are those who write in wisdom, and firmness tempered with gentleness, and a patience unending?

It is so infinitely easier to spoil a child than it is to train him wisely, to give him the thing refused a moment before because he cries for it, and the noise he makes is a nuisance. To tell him crossly to hush up and not talk any more because the little brain, puzzling over many things and struggling to understand some of the mysteries around it, will ask troublesome and stupid questions just at the moment when your book is most interesting or your head aches. Heavens, the patience of all the angels combined is needed to make one perfect mother! The responsibility has no let up to it; it is line upon line, and precept upon precept, in season and out of season, and even then suppose one should fail? It must be terrible for a parent to see the unrestrained passions of a well-grown child, to watch his violent temper if angered, his sullen sulkiness if thwarted, his selfish uncheerful manner to those around him, and to have conscience say—"That is all your work; you spoiled him because it was too much trouble to train him properly. If you had instructed him in gentleness and forgiveness and self-control, he could never exhibit such ungoverned rage; if you had denied him things with firmness, and taught him to bear disappointments, he would not to-day make your heart ache with those black looks and that sulky silence; had you earlier taught him to be generous in thought and in

deed, and had impressed upon him that a certain amount of cheery friendliness is due one mortal from another, you would not have been forced to blush for his loutish ungraciousness of demeanour." And I believe conscience must say just this to parents very frequently. Too much responsibility is it all when one thinks of it seriously; and did one so think, the subject would grow in magnitude until few would willingly face it. I have spoken only of the temporal side of the question—the child's physical and mental training; but think of that other spiritual side, of the child's little white soul which is to be guided and influenced, and remember the quick imitativeness of children, their retentive memories, the startling clearness with which they see through humbug, and the tenacity with which they remember example. *Ach lieber Himmel!* let me play with other people's pretty toddling things, but save me the horror of ever knowing that through any neglect or carelessness on my part I have made more difficult the life here, or impossible the life hereafter, to any child of my own!

We spend our days in excursions, going for long tramps, and eating our luncheon under the trees. There are Madame de P—— and myself, a clever little French artist who sketches, and the small fry. A donkey-boy goes to attend to the animals, as by turn the tired ones

of the party ride on donkeys, and no less than five dogs accompany us; then the weather is perfect for out-of-door life, and I never saw the place looking so lovely. I wish you would leave Paris. How you can stand that white glare and the August smells I cannot understand. Can you not get away to Biarritz? *Toujours fidèle.* M.

CCXLVI

D—, 15th September.

Delighted, *mon ami*, that you are out of the heat and glare of Paris and are being well amused, as I know you always are, in these visits to the empress. Write me a full account of your life at the Villa Eugénie, and, above all, tell me that you are feeling well and more yourself there. My letter must be brief, for we are just off to the R—— Valley for the day; even as I write the children are calling me, and their combined voices make a noise which you would pronounce insufferable! Adieu.

CCXLVII

PARIS, 2d November.

We reached here last evening. I am well up in metaphysics. Let me know when I can see you.

CCXLVIII

(Letter missing)

CCXLIX

PARIS, 19th November 1861.

Your letter was delightful. The little Prince Imperial must be a charming child, even if sometimes rather terrible. I laughed heartily over his reason for bowing to the people, but should fancy it must cause a smile when he gives it in public! By the dance which you describe I presume that the Duke of Athole and his companions treated you to the Highland Fling, and am not astonished that you found it alarming. Since many a long day your letters have not been so like yourself as this last one. I think our discussions on metaphysics must have done you great good, cheered away some of the cobwebs from your brain which have bothered you lately. Is my supposition correct?

CCL

R—, 9th January 1862.

Jamais de la vie! Of what can you be thinking? I know my Paris, know just what it will stand, and just where it draws the line:

know the narrow crooked *escalier de service* in every *appartement meublé* up which mounts so much knowledge of *ces messieurs* so *comme il faut* who decorously mount the broad steps of the grand staircase. *Mais, mon cher, vous êtes fou ! N'en parlons plus.* The lessons in botany have evidently gone to your head ! Do you remember some lines of Heine—I must repeat the first four that you may understand the last two, and had I space I would quote the whole—

“Ich rief den Teufel und er kam,
Und ich sah ihm mit Verwund’rung an !
Er ist nicht hässlich und ist nicht lahm,
Er ist ein lieber scharmanter Mann.

Und als ich recht besah sein Gesicht,
Fand ich in ihm einen alten Bekannten.”¹

There, *mein Freund*, you have the answer to the last page of your letter in more expressive language than any I could write. Ask me no more.

Pray do not waste all your affection on that cat which you seem to be so attentive to, or I shall grow as jealous of it as I was of the horrible beast you fed upon flies. It was really quite a relief to my mind when that repulsive

¹ I called the devil and he came,
Can he be under heaven’s ban !
He is not ugly and is not lame,
He is a dear and charming man.

And as I looked him in the face
I found in him an old acquaintance.

creature died. I begin to believe that you are slightly jealous of these children who afford me so much amusement. Poor little mites, they have convinced me of one thing, and that is, that grown-up people talk a great deal of nonsense about the happy days of childhood. I do not believe that children are half as happy as they get the credit of being. Everything is so terribly real to them, and they are so absolutely ignorant that they have nothing to fall back upon. To say to a child "Not now, some other time you can do it," conveys to his mind nothing but blank desolation, the crushing infinity of space and limitless ages. Each day I feel more convinced that thoughtless words or expressions, used by their elders, often give children hours of bitter puzzled thought, simply because the poor little things possess neither the knowledge nor the experience which would disentangle jest from earnestness. Further, to break a promise, however slight, made to a child I consider absolutely criminal, and another sin almost beyond forgiveness in my opinion, is to say to a little fellow, what only the other day I heard a mother say to her son, "No, go away, I cannot kiss a naughty boy good-night," and the poor little man, too proud to cry, but with a quivering lip, left the room and went to bed with a heart swelling with a sense of injustice, and his first baby realisation of what it is to have your hand against every man and every

man's hand against you. I saw him later lying in his little cot, with hot flushed cheeks and two great tear-drops on the dark eyelashes, and even in sleep short sobs came now and then. What hard thoughts must have come to the sore smarting little soul after he had been left alone in the dark and told to go to sleep. Poor little fellow, he at least had not found childhood all happiness. But you will call me maudlin if I write much more about small humans.

I will look out for the book you refer to of Max Müller, but doubt my intelligence being equal to the finding of it without knowing the title ; however, I will try. I am re-reading parts of Shakespeare ; how was it possible for a man to obtain the wonderful insight into human nature which every sentence of his writings shows ! A line in *Julius Cæsar* has haunted me all day, that one in Antony's speech to "Friends, Romans, Countrymen," the line which says—"The evil that men do lives after them." Ay, that's the worst of it. If only we could keep our favourite sins for ourselves, have them to live with us, and be decently buried with us, it might be all very well, but to know that when death, that one only certain thing in life upon which we can count never to fail us, has in turn come to us, laid us low, snuffed us out, that *then*, we helpless and gone, *then* our sins rampage the world on their own account, we powerless to check their vagaries, but always

responsible for them ; this staggers one. Well, here we are, put into the world, not at our own asking, but all the same bound to act out our part in the play as if we liked it. It seems endless sometimes, and deadly wearisome, but, to quote Shakespeare again, "The night is long that never finds the day."

Do not forget your cousin's *fête* ; do you want me to look up anything for her in this part of the world ? . . . I could not finish my letter until to-day, the 13th, having had no end of *ennuis*. *La petite* has been very ill, and is only now beginning to improve, and Madame de P—— has been suddenly called away, leaving me more responsibility than I quite fancy. The book has been ordered. I finally succeeded in unearthing the thing you wanted. Do write and give me some idea of when you think of returning to Paris. *Aufwiedersehn*.

CCLI

(Letter missing)

CCLII

HOMBOURG, 5th June.

In spite of the charms of this place which I always delight in, I am "exceeding vexed" with myself that I did not do as you advised, put off the "cure" here until later, and go to

London while you are there for the exhibition. It really was very stupid of me to keep to my original programme; why did you not insist upon changing it, and, whether I liked it or not, prove to me how stupid I was? Your letter from London must come now in a few days, and I know the reading of it will complete my dissatisfaction with myself, and you, and the world in general! I am growing too cross to write, so will say adieu.

CCLIII

HOMBOURG, 10th June 1862.

Yours of the 6th has just come; what a crass idiot I was not to go to London! but there is no use abusing myself now, it is too late, you are almost ready to return to Paris, where I will try to meet you, and moreover, as I am here I might as well get all the good I can from the waters; I fancy temper is hardly a good assistant in establishing any sort of cure, so I will keep calm, in spite of knowing myself to have been a fool. It is provoking that the exhibition should be so small a success after all the trouble it seems to have given every one, yourself included. The restaurant arrangements I knew were quite safe to be bad—they always are in England. Did you ever try a cup of tea (the national beverage, by the way)

at an English railway station? If you have not, I would advise you, as a friend, to continue to abstain! The names of the American drinks are rather against them, the straws are, I think, about the best part of them. You do not tell me what you think of Mr. Disraeli. I once met him at a ball at the Duke of Sutherland's in the long picture gallery of Stafford House. I was walking with Lord Shrewsbury, and without a word of warning he stopped and introduced him, mentioning with reckless mendacity that I had read every book he had written and admired them all, then he coolly walked off and left me standing face to face with the great statesman. He talked to me for some time, and I studied him carefully. I should say he was a man with one steady aim: endless patience, untiring perseverance, iron concentration; marking out one straight line before him so unbending that despite themselves men stand aside as it is drawn straightly and steadily on. A man who believes that determination brings strength, strength brings endurance, and endurance brings success. You know how often in his novels he speaks of the influence of women, socially, morally, and politically, yet his manner was the least interested or deferential in talking that I have ever met with in a man of his class. He certainly thought this particular woman of singularly small account, or else the brusque and tactless allusion to his books may

perhaps have annoyed him as it did me ; but whatever the cause, when he promptly left me at the first approach of a mutual acquaintance, I felt distinctly snubbed. Of the two men, Mr. Gladstone was infinitely more agreeable in his manner, he left one with the pleasant feeling of measuring a little higher in cubic inches than one did before, than which I know no more delightful sensation. *À Paris, bientôt.*

CCLIV

(Letter missing)

CCLV

—, *Thursday, 21st August.*

Methinks, *mon cher*, that we are growing old ; going gently down the hill together, you and I. That one word together takes whatever sting there may be from out the patent fact, for fact I fear it is. How little we quarrel now, how placid and tranquil we have grown. You say far less about the splendour of my eyes, but write instead about your doctor's diagnosis, and the remedies he hopes to cure you with ; your palpitations, sleeplessness, and want of appetite. And I, not one whit behind you, tell you my eyes are weak, and cry no longer in frantic passion-thrilled tones that even conscience shall

be drugged for your dear sake because I cannot bring myself to say you nay in anything, only write calmly of the "cure" at Hombourg and the benefit I find from the use of mineral waters. Alack-a-day, how times do change! A sure proof of advancing years on my part is that I can no longer endure with even a semblance of patience the petty jealousies and squabbles in which the natives of this place pass their petty little lives. It gets upon my nerves, this constant wrangling and silly littleness; soon shall I quit the place and sever all connection with it if this sort of thing continues. I always knew that provincial life as a continued existence would be insupportable, but for a short space of time I liked it, now it begins to bore me inexpressibly. An American girl is singing in the villa next to mine with her windows wide open, and my poor unoffending ears are being tortured with those pretty lines of Heine pronounced too execrably—

"Dein Herzchen so süß und so falsch und so klein,
Es kann nirgend was süß' res und falscheres sein."

Over and over again the little Yankee shrieks out the words, giving a worse intonation at every fresh attempt. She is half in love with a German baron who is here, and whether his little heart is really the sweetest and falsest that ever was, or whether by singing this statement to him in the most rasping German she hopes

to convince him that it ought to be, I know not, I have merely the benefit of the practising. Adieu, *lieber alter Freund*.

CCLVI

—, 5th September.

Was it because you objected to my suggestions that we are neither of us quite so young as we were that you not only ignore them, but write two pages of natural history which you know I shall dislike to read? I am glad you have at least the grace to say that you are convinced I shall be furious at the stories you tell me, but why waste your time upon them? Your letter really deserves no answer, and I shall not tell you when I mean to be in Paris, or any of my plans.

CCLVII

—, 1st October 1862.

We never shall agree as to Victor Hugo, so it seems senseless to discuss him. I find his language quite wonderful, even although he may coin words of his own to better express his thoughts. I read the speech he made at Brussels, and to which you refer, and liked it, but do let us leave him as a bone of contention to any other dogs inclined to quarrel over him.

It was precisely Thiers's opinion of the great Napoleon which I particularly liked in his twentieth volume ; it struck me as being so just and unbiassed. I do not find quite so much time for reading as I could wish, for Madame de P—— and the children are with me, and I must make their visit as agreeable as possible. My little niece grows lovelier day by day.

Write to me when you get back to Paris, and tell me your plans.

CCLVIII

(Letter missing)

CCLIX

(Letter missing)

CCLX

PARIS, 10th December 1862.

Merci, cher ami, for a charming letter dated Cannes, 5th December. It is delightful merely to hear of all the flowers, and open windows, and floods of sunshine, and smiling country, while Paris is treating us rather harshly so far as temperature is concerned. But the winter promises to be a gay one ; there are quantities of strangers here, and skating out at the Bois has become the rage. Their Majesties often

honour the ice sports with their presence, and even take part in them. The empress seems to be more admired than ever, and is certainly an extremely beautiful woman. The little prince is looked after with affectionate eyes whenever he appears, and the emperor is keeping all classes in Paris busy. New streets and boulevards are being opened, workmen are kept employed with building, the shopkeepers are pleased at the impetus given to trade by the *fêtes* and entertainments at the Tuileries, society has already begun with dinners and small dances, and innumerable balls are to follow later. No one has time to grumble, and France seems at last contented and happy. God grant she may remain so, and close her history in peace. I will look up the Russian name about which you wish information. *Mille tendresses.*

CCLXI

PARIS, 9th January 1863.

Well, I will read *Salammbô* if you really wish it, but I do so detest horrors and executions in books, which ought only to rest, or amuse, or instruct. I will also look out for the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of the 15th, and read M. Tourguenief's "Les Pères et les Enfants." And for you I have a delightful new book to recommend,—George Eliot's *Romola*,—which I have

just finished. I will send you two short, very short, extracts from it, both of which have a bearing upon our last conversation together, which I feel tolerably sure you have not forgotten. The first quotation is as follows:—“As a strong body struggles against fumes with the more violence when they begin to be stifling, a strong soul struggles against phantasies with all the more alarmed energy when they threaten to govern in the place of thought.” And the second one answers a question which you put to me during our farewell walk, in words far more to the point than any I could find at the moment:—“Savonarola said, with keener emotion than he had yet shown, ‘Be thankful, my daughter, if your own soul has been spared perplexity; and judge not those to whom a harder lot has been given.’ . . . ‘I do not believe!’ said Romola, her whole frame shaken with passionate repugnance. ‘God’s kingdom is something wider, else let me stand outside it with the beings that I love!’” But you must read the book; it is powerfully written, and George Eliot cannot be judged by extracts.

No, do not change the date of coming. The 20th or 21st will suit me equally well. By that time I shall be able to get through the almost endless commissions with which absent friends honour me. Very flattering it may be for people to write that they have such perfect

confidence in my taste that they are quite willing to leave the selection of their winter wardrobe entirely to me, but very trying it certainly is to spend hours in these crowded shops and dance attendance on fashionable dressmakers. Oh, why did Eve eat the apple and condemn us to wear clothes! gracefully draped fig-leaves might have been made so becoming, and would have shown off the figure to such advantage. *Au revoir*, I shall count the hours until the 20th.

CCLXII

PARIS, 31st January.

I am too much disappointed to write, for up to the last moment I had felt confident that you could come. Do be more careful in future; what is a sunset worth, the most exquisite one ever seen, if it must be an exchange for an illness? "*Je suis bien triste, bien désappointée.*"

CCLXIII

ROME, 1st May 1863.

How right you were in your description of this place; of how impossible it is to carry out any premeditated plan for seeing the thousand and one things one ought to see, because

of the "unexpected" which at every corner of the street distracts one's attention, and draws one on from sensation to sensation. I agree with you also in thinking it far wiser to have one wide, soul-filling memory of a great whole than to carry away a crowd of smaller details which must at a distance be more or less confusing. But how one's senses reel here with the souvenirs of the past which crowd through the mind and appeal to the eye, while an almost hopeless feeling comes over one of the utter impossibility of taking in half of what there is to appreciate. I went to St. Peter's as you advised, just as the day was falling, when the great distances inside the building were dim and shadowy, and the light before the altar was but half defined. The cherubs holding shells of holy water near the door were barely outlined, and the few kneeling figures scattered about looked like bowed phantoms. All colour in the mosaics was of course lost, and no details of the vast edifice could be seen, but I know why you told me to go at this hour; I think I felt what you wished me to feel when you thought of it. We have wandered through acres of picture galleries, and seen endless palaces and ruins, the coliseum, many of the churches; in fact, all the things that every one sees. And to attempt to describe Rome would be only ancient history to you. Be content with knowing that I enjoy it as I have seldom

enjoyed anything, and you may add that the one drawback to my perfect contentment is the fact that you are not with me. We are going to the Catacombs to-morrow, and if my courage is equal to the experiment of putting out my candle and remaining quite alone in one of the little corridors I will try it, but it sounds a rather gruesome and uncanny proceeding. Adieu.

CCLXIV

L—, 10th June.

Yes, like the giant in a child's fairy tale, I am coming nearer with alarming speed. That I shall be able to write a comprehensive letter I much doubt, so dazed am I mentally by all that I have seen. I have not in any way "taken in" half of it. Whether a clearer comprehension will come with time, I cannot say; at present my mind is one great blur, one confused jumble of sights and sounds and impressions. Perhaps I may realise it all in the coming winter evenings by a sympathetic fire, which will burn low and darkly as I think of all the stains upon Pagan, and Christian, and Imperial Rome, all the dark blots on the history of Italy in olden days and the present time; and then will leap into glowing blaze as the wonders of art and skill wrought in the proud city of the seven hills come clearly

defined in a brilliant array of mind-pictures, and great names made sacred by the touch of genius stand out boldly from the common herd, and the memory of mighty deeds which have lived in fame thrills my soul with the knowledge that men worthy of the great gift of life have once lived ! The fire will burn on with vivid heat and light as reminiscences such as these thicken and multiply, and I shall come at last really to understand what I now only dimly feel.

Your poor friend Bucci at Civita Vecchia tore himself in two for us. I never met such a complaisant, self-sacrificing individual. Your name acted like an open sesame with him, and he abjectly laid himself and his treasures at our feet.

CCLXV

PARIS, 28th June 1863.

I believe these hurried meetings are almost more unsatisfactory than actual absence, what is your sage view on the subject ? I never did quite agree with the opinion that half a loaf is better than no bread, but on the contrary have clung to the *tout ou rien* principle. That my mind is in an extremely vacuous state you will have already perceived, and lest I should be tempted to string a still longer chaplet of worn-out old proverbs, as an English clergyman

who is not gifted with the art of sermon-making strings texts, I will close with the assurance that your *Cosaque* has pleased me immensely, and I prophesy for it *un grand succès*.

CCLXVI

DIEPPE, 10th August 1863.

I have been wondering this morning which were the most to be envied—people with strong capacities for enjoyment, and the corresponding powers of suffering; or people of a stolid, phlegmatic nature, feeling neither joy nor sorrow very keenly, taking things as they come, not eating their hearts out with intense anticipation, or exhausting them with devouring possession, or feeling them ache beyond bearing with the *Weltschmerz* which Goethe tells of in such comprehensive words—that world-weariness for which he tried every known cure, yet which cursed so large a part of his life? The natural disposition of man is to be happy, and if one thing fails in giving him happiness he tries another; only some do this in a calm methodical way, with no expense of heart's blood and the wine of life; while others drain both at one mad straining venture to compel fate to slake their burning thirst, no matter what may be the consequences. Dregs alone cannot be pleasant food and drink later on,

when the thirst and hunger come again, especially if the years are long through which they must serve as daily sustenance. A short life and a merry one ; is that, I wonder, the message which the cool salt sea brings as it rolls in on crested waves, leaving little lines of pearly foam on the sand at my feet ? How I wish I could clearly decipher the meaning of the sea, with its many-toned voices and its hoary wisdom of all time ! It knows so much, if only it would speak.

Write to me from London, which place you will, I fear, find almost empty, save for the millions of toilers who, by the conceited decree of a select few hundred, are ignored, and not supposed to exist. Adieu, *cher ami*.

CCLXVII

(Letter missing)

CCLXVIII

—, 1st October 1863.

Three people lately have asked me if I have read the book you mentioned in your last letter, *Une Saison à Paris*, which did not particularly tempt me after your little story of its author and her curious attempt to make a favourable impression on his Majesty. I remember you

fancied that this story might cause me to make the sign of the cross, which should I make each time your stories suggest its beneficial effect, would, I fear, be brought into contempt by too frequent application. *La Vie de Jésus*, by Renan, I mean to read so soon as a little tranquillity creeps into my life again; it has lately been one continued racket, not conducive to anything so serious as this book. I wonder if Renan will explain a point which has always puzzled me; why, if Jesus in mercy really came into the world to save all sinners, does He so relentlessly limit the number to a paltry few?

You must by this time be at Cannes, or certainly *en route* for that place, so I will send these few lines there in hopes of a long letter full of news.

CCLXIX

—, 20th October 1863.

Pas possible to be in Paris in November. I have made an engagement with Madame de C—— to go wherever she fancies for that month. She is far from well, but always such a good friend that I would do much to keep her friendship. Besides, do I not know by sad experience what your "*peut-être*" means when applied to Compiègne or to any of the Royal residences? You are growing to be too good a courtier, and in consequence I suffer. Is this

not so?—own it frankly, and you will have a better chance of forgiveness.

I was reading only this morning what Stendhal says of *Don Juan*, that it must always be a popular poem because in it "*il y a du diable et de l'amour*." Odd, is it not, how often those two words find themselves in a close proximity? I do not feel in the least affectionate to-day—the softer passions look a little *fade* in the hard brightness of the autumn sunshine. You have grown to be such a sage I scarcely know you for my friend of the stormy days when our chief delight lay in the childish tormenting of each other. When you grow less wise perchance my affection for you may return.

CCLXX

26th November 1863.

You can no longer, *mon ami*, monopolise all the ills that flesh is heir to. I have a wretched cold, and am as hoarse as a revolutionist who has injured his vocal cords for life by shouting *à bas la tyrannie!* *Par exemple, vous vous amusez bien* at Compiègne in your new rôle of *impresario*. What did I say about your "*peut-être*"? and of what earthly use would it have been for me to come to Paris in order to see you, while you passed your time some dozens of miles away in instructing young ladies how

to rival ballet dancers? You might judge from my style of writing that I am not only cross but jealous, in which, however, you would be entirely mistaken. I am delighted that you are enjoying your visit, and your story of your young lady with *jambes* like *deux flageolets* made me laugh heartily; but the *Hauptsache*, as the Germans say, is that you are well, and that your too attentive aches and pains seem for the moment to have forgotten you. Be careful, however; do not overdo it, and lay up a nice little crop of consequences for future discomfiture. You complain that I write too laconically, and do not answer your questions; that I commit an indefinite number of other indiscretions, including a non-mention of the charming child who so interests me. How difficult it is to please people! The tender conscience I possess having reproached me with writing too much about the little one, I have purposely abstained from boring you with her perfections, or dwelling upon my love for her. She spent some time with me at ———, delighting me as usual with her growing intelligence and beauty. At present certainly there seems no danger of her being *sotte*, and if any influence I possess can save her from that awful fate you may count upon its being exerted to do so. What a future contact with society in its present state may do for her it is of course impossible to say. Adieu.

CCLXXI

PARIS, 3d January 1864.

We arrived here yesterday, just missing New Year's Day, which I am rather glad to have escaped. I had hoped to find a letter from you, but there is none, and I am most anxious to hear how you are. Do write at once. I am reading Aristophane, but expect to be much shocked by it. Did the Athenian women in olden times assist at public *représentations*? In mad haste. M.

CCLXXII

PARIS, 16th January.

First of all, are you better? In pity answer yes, for I suffer with you to the extent of being miserable when you tell me that you are ill. For my idea as to the *fête* of *la Sainte Eulalie*, *la voici*: I am obliged to send to London very soon for several things, let me include your gift to your cousin, and try and find something quite different from your former offerings, something made in England and essentially English. Let me know what you think of this. Yes, we are freezing here, and banked in snow. There has been horrible suffering among the poor, and the empress as usual has been the first to make an effort to relieve it. Naturally with such a lead

many have followed suit from reasons best known to themselves, but, whatever the reasons, the result has been favourable, and a fair share of organised charity is working well and doing much good. How fortunate that you are not here, but are instead basking in scented sunshine ; your constant mention of the quantities of flowers, and the balmy air at Cannes, makes me long to go there some time in the near future. So soon as I am a little settled and have leisure for anything really worth doing, I will read *Les Nûtes*, and pay particular attention to the dialogue *du Juste et de l'Injuste* which you mention, trusting it may be less shocking than this terrible Aristophane, which is, I grant, spiritual, but with an *esprit* encased in mud ! Adieu *ami toujours chère*.

CCLXXIII

PARIS, 20th February 1864.

But of course you shall have your things from London whenever you like. Send your order to Poole, and let me know when he will have the clothes ready, the rest I can manage easily. The gift for the Sainte Eulalie is already ordered. I am more distressed than I can say at what you tell me of your cough, which I had hoped was much better in the Cannes sunshine. Do not think of venturing near Paris at present ;

les grippes sont partout, as you have heard, and you would run great risk in coming here. I am off to London in a day or two, but trust I may not be detained there longer than a fortnight. Adieu.

CCLXXIV

PARIS,

Saturday, 19th March 1864.

It was good to pass once again a long happy afternoon with you, and from now until the 12th of April, almost a month, we shall be able to prove that the best of letters is a bad substitute for "live intercourse." Only do not let us spoil these hours of possession in dwelling upon the swift-coming ones of separation. That is a *bêtise* we have more than once committed, and is unworthy of two such highly-gifted mortals as we profess to be! *À demain.*

CCLXXV

17th July 1864.

Merely a line to beg a commission should you go off to Madrid before I see you again. You remember the *mouchoirs de Nipi*—I am most anxious for some, and you are so good about getting me all sorts of out-of-the-way objects which no one else would be able to discover that I do not hesitate to remind you of these. Please do not forget them. At a

venture I will send this to the British Museum, London, where you are probably working far harder than you ought to work. If amiably inclined you might send me your actual address ; it is not every letter that I should care to send off as a chance shot !

CCLXXVI

Wednesday, 25th July 1864.

What marvels you write me about Lady F—— P——'s marriage. No wonder it has caused a sensation, but personally I should be inclined to think Mr. C—— rather fortunate in discovering the tendency of the lady's predilections before instead of after matrimony with himself. I once saw Lady H——, as I suppose one must now call her, and found her very lovely to look at, but most of the P——s are credited with possessing beauty ; perhaps it is their strongest recommendation. Other characteristics which they possess it is as well to keep strictly within the limits of the P—— family circle. As you are returning so quickly to Paris I will not write again to London unless I hear that you are still there.

CCLXXVII

(Letter missing)

T

CCLXXVIII

(Letter missing)

CCLXXIX

PARIS, 29th December 1864.

Impossible to write to-day, as I have taken cold in my eyes. No handkerchiefs as yet. Shall hope to send you a longer letter on New Year's Day.

CCLXXX

PARIS, *New Year's Day*, 1865.

The rain and hail are hurtling against the windows, the trees, snow-sheeted and spectral, are gleaming white against a low-hung despondent sky, and the hooting wind sounds like owls at play in the chimneys. A more utterly dreary day could not well be imagined; and while shivering and depressed myself, I rejoice that you are probably enjoying sunshine and a cheerful beginning of the year 1865. Your constant mention of ill health distresses me beyond measure, and I hope much from the climate of Cannes, which always suits you.

Who do you think has taken the apartment above us? Mr. G—— and his erratic wife, and his eight still more erratic children! Only to

know that the same house contains them and me is enough to induce mental collapse upon my part, and I devoutly wish that they had established themselves and their erraticness anywhere else. It is, I know, always a mistake to feel more for people than they feel for themselves; but in this case it is so difficult not to believe that they must on the face of things feel a very great deal, and yet how can they, and still continue to go on in the same senselessly erratic way? Poor things, I am sorry for them, but they irritate me, and I should be so glad if they would live in some other house, and some other town, and some other country!

Do not worry over those handkerchiefs. They will probably turn up all right, and if they do not, no great harm will be done. I will go out just as soon as this mad wind and rain have finished their wild games, and find you a nice lot of English books, for you are quite right, at Christmas-time there are generally plenty to choose from, good, bad, and indifferent, mostly the latter. I too have been reading Madame du Deffand's *Letters*, which I found amusing. She must have been a delightfully witty and wicked old woman. Her opinions and readings of character are sometimes uncommonly shrewd. I hope that you finished the thirty-five letters still left for you to write after concluding your last to me. Is it strange that the rest you go away to obtain

does you little or no good? How can it benefit you in any way when you will persist in working whether you feel equal to it or not? Come now, begin this New Year wisely, take care of yourself first, and let work come second. Ah love, love, remember that you are yourself. In all this crowded world no one could ever take your place in any way, least of all in the heart and devotion of

MARIQUITA.

CCLXXXI

PARIS, 23d January.

I have heard nothing in regard to your works or the proofs. Shall I go to Michel Lévy and make inquiries or in any way hurry them? I did not like to do so without asking you. I once told you that the actual meaning of the word aggravation was an English lawyer, but I was wrong; make it publisher every time, choosing any nationality you like, one seems as bad as another. They are maddening, infuriating, exasperating. Let me hear at once just what steps you would like me to take. Delighted as I should be at seeing you back here, do not, I beg of you, run any risk in leaving Cannes too soon. You will find me here whenever you come, because I shall wait here for you, but do get all the good that Cannes air and Cannes sunshine can give,

CCLXXXII

PARIS, 17th April 1865.

Cher ami, your letter has caused me such unhappiness that I think I could not bear the same were it to come often. It is cruel that you of all men should be thus doomed to a life of suffering, and I would not blame you for feeling neither courage nor resignation, even if this were true, whereas I know how much injustice you do yourself by saying that it is. There are such relative degrees of courage, and such different phases of resignation. But you will see, I feel quite sure of it, that this return of steady fine weather will make a difference. You *must* be better when it is dry and sunny than when there is wind and rain, and it is, I feel convinced, from the ill effects of the long-continued bad weather that you are still suffering; just the first few fine days cannot counteract that at once, but you will see, as it continues fine you will continue steadily to improve. It must be so. You know that really you have immense courage, more than most people, your depression is merely the effect of this unusual state of the atmosphere at Cannes, where by all the rules of equity and justice there ought to be only the bluest and sunniest and most beautiful effects. All unusual things upset one, the human animal being naturally unpliant and set in his ways, to use a good old-time expression.

Your account of the scandal connected with Lord Brougham interested me, as I know several members of the family. When the English do indulge in scandals what monsters they are! None of your little petty delinquencies or half-hearted misdemeanours, but the whole *flagrante delicto*; no reading between the lines, but the complete three-volume novel; large print, wide margin, brilliant cover, with the price marked in legible figures. They go in pretty thoroughly for the comprehensive saying that one might as well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb, and I think it is perhaps a question whether they are not tolerably right.

Send me better news as soon as you feel up to writing, but never attempt a letter to me unless you are sure that a chat will do you good, and the act of chatting not do you harm.

CCLXXXIII

MUNICH, 15th July.

We have followed strictly the plan of voyage which you laid out, going by Bâle, Constance, Lindau, and Kempton, and now for the past ten days we have been settled at the Hôtel Bavière, "doing" Munich most conscientiously but spending most of our time in the galleries, the new and the old Pinacothek. Do you remember in the former such a pretty little modern pic-

ture called "The First Snow," where the old grandfather holds up a baby wrapped in a blanket, while a second child stands beside him, and the soft star flecks fall over them all? It is a most simple composition, but for some reason it touched me, perhaps because as a child I always had dreamy fancies about the snow. I saw so much in the star-shaped flakes, and it seemed so wonderful to me that such small soft things could mass together into broad white silvery sheets, covering field and meadow and all trace of path and road, and could go on mounting higher and higher and packing closer and closer, and all so silently; the little feathery stars coming finally to resist in their cold white strength powerful men, and beasts, and iron ploughs. I think my first realisation of accumulated strength from small beginnings came from this childish impression of the snow, which, like so many other impressions, fall into the mind and lie hidden there until some practical application hunts them out. They told us too, such wonderful nursery tales about the snow, that Mother Carey was picking her chickens when it fell; or that downy feathers from angels' wings were fluttering through the skies; or that all the plants and fruits were dead and Dame Nature made them every year a shroud to cover them for the winter's burial. What an odd conglomeration of wisdom and nonsense children's minds are fed on! Poor

little wretches, life is puzzling enough to their half-awakened minds without confusing them still further by the rubbish grown-up people seem to think the only food suited to their poor little starving mental stomachs. But I have wandered very far from Munich and the present time, and all because of having looked at a little wistful child gazing at the snow.

I laugh whenever I see a pair of green woollen stockings and the "*jambes bavaroises*" encased within them! Should you really like to see me wear such things? *J'en doute.*

CCLXXXIV

BERNE, 29th August.

Your letter from London has been forwarded to me here, where we are detained on account of Madame de C—— having sprained her ankle. Why in your account of your visit to Mr. Gladstone did you not tell me more of the man himself? You know the immense interest which I take in him, the intense admiration which I have for him. If ever a man had a future it is he, and one of his characteristics appeals peculiarly to me, I mean his strong personal influence, magnetism it may almost be called, so great a hold does it take upon one's imagination. I felt it myself during the one or two days when I met him long ago at Lady

G——'s, I should feel it again, I am certain, if I could again be in his society. A man with that gift must, I think, always be a leader of men. What do you mean by the sentence you use in describing him, that "*Il y a en lui de l'enfant, de l'homme d'État et du Fou*"? What a combination! I think I know what you mean by the touch of the child about him; it is a trait which I have noticed more than once accompanying great intellect and genius. The signs of a madman were certainly not discernible when I saw him; they may have developed since. If you really return to Paris next week I will try my best to meet you there. My doing so, however, will depend entirely on the state of Madame de C——'s ankle, which is a positive nuisance. And it was so quickly done and so senselessly. We were watching the bears in the pit; the creatures were so absurd that we grew quite excited over their ungainly antics. There was a crowd around the place as usual, and in trying to get nearer to the edge in order to look over at a fascinating little beast quite at the bottom of the great round space, where he was hugging a little brother as if he held his worst enemy to his heart, and did not mean to release him until every bone cracked, poor Madame de C—— stepped on a loose stone, and, *presto change!* the deed was done, she was laid up a prisoner, and I necessarily am a captive with her.

CCLXXXV

BÂLE, 5th October 1865.

How good of you to keep a proof for me of your article on the *Life of Julius Cæsar*; I shall prize it highly; I like the outline you give me of your treatment of the subject, and so far as I can judge it seems to me you have cleverly attained the *juste milieu*, a most difficult point to reach in anything. No, frankly, I do not understand a word of your story of the son of Prince C—— who died at Rome. The wording of his will would certainly incline one to think him a little mad, but who is not, upon one point or another? It strikes me altogether as being a mad world, peopled by madmen. Looking at things in general from this standpoint, one may be able to comprehend one's fellows, not otherwise. Does it not, for instance, argue acute mania as the malady from which I suffer, that years may come and years may go and Time go on for ever, yet still, in spite of all, my creed never changes, and can still be read in three short words—"I love you"? Would any college of physicians hesitate to declare this madness of the most hopeless kind? Are you, too, not mad in trusting to my love? Surely you never can have read that wise proverb—"Trust your dog to the end, a woman till the first opportunity." Much

wisdom is here condensed in quantity, but eloquent with truth. Mad, mad, mad! yes, all the world is mad, and all the men and women in it! Only little children are really sane, and they merely because the shock has not yet come which will knock reason from her throne. They have not yet trusted and been deceived; not yet loved and been deserted; not yet learned that civility means self-interest; that fame is in reality only a worthless tinsel badge; that honour, in the eyes of men, may be bought at the cost of self-respect; that gold can turn to rust, and success grow bitter as the apples of Sodom; that all earth's promises, which glitter so temptingly, never yet have stood the test of time. When knowledge such as this comes home to the human breast, then all that is childlike and sane falls tremblingly away, and men grow mad with knowing what life really is. Perchance a few may find an honest thing to take the place of life's delusions. If so, no longer mad, but happy trusting fools, they would show rare wisdom could they hold it tight, trust to it, believe in it, love it, pray to it, live by it, die in its blessed hope of rest and eternal good with holy confidence in its reality.

Mad friend, good-night. So madly have I loved you, ay, so love you still, that the mere fact of writing it proves me mad!

CCLXXXVI

(Letter missing)

CCLXXXVII

PARIS, *New Year's Eve*, 1866.

Are you lost, *mon ami*? Do you never mean to write to me again? That you are not suffering I feel almost sure, so strong a belief have I in the fact that ill news never tarries in the telling. Let me begin the coming year with the assurance of your wellbeing and your continued affection for myself; no other commencement of this fresh era of existence would suit my mood. Not a line have I had from you since your letter dated somewhere in the early existence of the month of November, when you asked me conundrums about Victor Hugo's mental state. Some time ago I told you all the world was mad, why should you wish to isolate the poet from this list? You know well, however, that you did not mean what you said when writing that you were inclined to think he had always been "*fou*." I have more than once heard you express a very different opinion of him and of his works. As to the *Chansons des Rues et des Bois*, I grant you, there is a good deal of feebleness about parts of them, but there is still sufficient matter

left in the subject of Victor Hugo and his madness to afford us several battles royal when we meet, if that happy event ever again takes place. You speak in joke about the book dealing with Moses, David, and Saint Paul, but there is more truth than you imagine in a later sentence of your letter where you say that you know I do not like conversation upon such subjects. No, it may be weak, and doubtless shows great want of intellect upon my part, but the only faith I have any faith in, is the blind unquestioning one of a child. Did I once seriously investigate it, once apply the tests of reason, intellect, common sense if you will, to the foundations of it, I should be lost in the hopeless labyrinth of it. The vision of that Anglican priest I met in such curious fashion at D—— comes before me as I write this. Tempt me not. If I could *honestly* believe the teachings of the Catholics and their Church, then would I unhesitatingly be of them; but as yet I cannot, therefore in pity leave me what you call the silly credulity to which I yet cling—the old devil with cloven hoof, the crucified God man Christ Jesus, a hell where bad people go, and a heaven peopled with good angels. Crude it may be, utterly senseless you believe it to be; all quite true the child thinks it. She is again with me, Madame de P—— having consented to the plan, and I delight in her.

I have heard Père Hyacinthe several times lately, and find him both earnest and eloquent. Adieu, *tachez d'écrire plus souvent à votre amie toujours,* M.

CCLXXXVIII

PARIS, 15th February.

Oh, how lazy you are to write so seldom; you deserve that my letters should cease entirely; but a forgiving disposition forbids my treating you with such severity. I will try other means, will be so seductive in my language and withal so chary of my news, that in very self-defence you will "beg for more." There are more ways than one of treating refractory mortals, and always there remains the old saying to fall back upon—"Birds that can sing, and won't sing, must be made to sing." *Eh bien, mon oiseau, chantez.* Tell me of yourself, your occupations, your surroundings. It is odd that I have never been to Cannes, never been tempted there even by your presence. I know the place is delightful, the society, as a rule, charming, the climate perfection; still, as I say, it has never yet tempted me.

On reading this production of my pen I find it quite as insipid as I intended to make it—no news, and nothing in the least entertaining; but when I tell you that my thoughts by day

and my dreams by night are all tinged with rosy-tinted hopes of hearing from you, of receiving a letter quickly, telling of repentance upon your part for the past, and resolution of amendment for the future, I know that you will show by your speedy answer that I have not written in vain.

CCLXXXIX

PARIS, 23d February.

Endlich, as the Germans say. At last a letter of the right sort with but the one drawback—where you tell me in it that you have found means to take fresh cold in spite of the fine weather. Badly managed this, my friend, very badly; still you assure me in the same sentence that you are better this year than you were last, and that, at least, is something. Yes, for the moment crinoline and the monstrosities in which it has indulged during the past few months are condemned; you will find us all far less voluminous on your return, *mais toujours femmes!* Your letter deserved a far longer and more worthy answer, but it is the old story, my wretched eyes have given out, and I dare not tax them too severely.

CCXC

CHATEAU DE —,

Midnight, 12th April.

Ah but worse, ten thousand times worse than mere *fatalité* ! I find no word in my dictionary strong enough to describe the situation. Not to meet for months, and then to miss each other in the same spot by just two hours—No, no expression I have ever heard is adequate to tell what I think of this. My visit is spoiled, *cela va sans dire*, but it will soon be over, which is a cause for thankfulness. And you are right in your supposition that I shall return to Paris at once, contrary to the customs of common mortals at this season of the year. To those who will the country and all its delights, Paris holds at present that which I most care for, and to Paris my steps will follow my already departed heart as promptly as the decencies of social life permit, and I can say adieu to my pleasant host and hostess. I fear they find me but tepidly exciting as a guest ! To-night so many memories come to me, fresh and living, not as ghosts of the past. "Only one thing really counts," this they say one and all the same. "Only one thing ; love. It's the only thing that tells in the long-run ; nothing else endures to the end ; nothing else is of any worth." And to-night I think with them ; to-night I firmly believe that there are more

deeply-dyed sins than those of love ; I believe that many sins can be washed away by love or become purified and redeemed. What is there that love cannot hallow ? Barren places of the earth blossom and become green if love smiles upon them ; darkness turns to light ; loneliness to a peopled world of sympathy and union ; doubts become blessed truths ; all things mortal and tangible, shadowy and unreal, touched by the magic of love, lose every power of evil and turn each ill to good. To-night I say I believe all this. Should I doubt it when day brings the sun and piercingness, I will think how few the hours now are which still remain to die before I and conviction are reunited, for if once we meet again, you and I, face to face, love's triumph is assured, and all things else must fall helplessly defeated.

CCXCI

TOURS, 24th August 1866.

My very best congratulations ; the little red rosette of the Légion d'Honneur has never been more appropriately bestowed ; I am most anxious to see it in your button-hole. Pray do not grow conceited as these increasing honours are showered upon you ! I have always believed that a moment comes in the successful

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life of a mortal, man or woman, when if it is passed with wisdom and dignity, that mortal becomes delightful; he has deserved all that fortune has brought him, and can bear without embarrassment fortune's favours; or else he becomes odious, if this critical turning has not been well passed; and his nature develops a weak spot which success has proved too much for. The time that we have just spent together was, I think, almost the happiest of my life. Ah, love me, *mon ami*, whatever comes, love me! Has the world changed since men thought it good to love, natural to trust, wise to believe? I sometimes think it has when I am away from you, and hear men talk with cynical scepticism of all that I hold most sacred and most dear. But I know that one man at least is wise, and natural, and good, when I am with you, and feel the strong affection which has lasted through long years and remained unchanged.

Tell me what is best worth seeing in this part of the world. Have you restored any of the buildings here, and if so, which are they? I will visit them and see what I think of your restorations. Do you not tremble at the thought of a critic who does not know the A B C of architecture?

I feel rather lost in this place, so write quickly and tell me what I ought to see.

CCXCII

D—, 19th September.

I write to Paris not knowing whether you have yet left there for Biarritz. Something odd always happens to me at this place ; invariably I meet people here who interest me beyond the common herd. Will you be kind to a little friend of mine who has stupidly ruined her life? You remember the pretty little Mademoiselle G—— who was a good deal in Paris the winter before last? I am certain that I have spoken to you of her often, even if you never met her. She was one of the most fascinating little beings I have ever encountered, extremely pretty, with a sad plaintive voice which, whether she spoke or sang, carried one's heart with it. She married Mr. T——, a cold uninteresting Englishman who was sadly in need of a wife with a *dot*. Fond as I was of Louise T—— both before and after her marriage, I was perfectly aware that she was not very clever, that is, she had no worldly wisdom of any kind, and a good deal more heart than head. The end proved this, for one fine morning about eighteen months after her marriage she went off to Biarritz with the young Comte de B—— who had been dangling about her for years. You know the sort of man he is, with a list of conquests rather longer than Don Giovanni's *mille e tre*, and you can understand

a pretty little simpleton being as wax in his hands. To my thinking the husband is very much to blame. He never in any way looked after his wife, or tried to amuse her, or make her any sort of companion, but left her entirely to herself, or to the seductive charms of the Comte de B——. It was not difficult to foresee who would win in that race, and I am sometimes tempted to believe that Mr. T—— was well content to let things take their course. Poor Louise, I can see her now as I write, with her sweet face and loving heart, her great wide innocent eyes like a child's, and her low touching voice which thrilled with a passion she herself could hardly have understood. Well, it was the old story, only if possible the Comte de B—— after ruining her life treated her a little worse than they generally do in old stories. He simply *pianté* her after spending all the money he happened to have about him, left her as he would have hesitated to leave a third-class actress, and telegraphed his wife that he was coming home. The prodigal of the Scriptures met with a no less flattering welcome back; the fatted calf was killed, and Monsieur was *fêted* by a dutiful wife and admiring family and a host of friends and acquaintances, while my poor little Louise is left to eat her heart out at Biarritz while her husband gets his divorce. Will you not go and see her and say some friendly words to her for me? It was

here at D—— that I first met her, and where I now hear what has happened to her. I wrote at once when I heard it, and her answer was such a sad, heart-broken little letter that I long to do something for her. She is far more sinned against than sinning, but as usual the punishment falls upon the one least guilty. I much fear that her own family will not be very kind to her in her trouble, and how she is to pass the rest of her young ruined life alone, God knows!

CCXCIII

D——, 27th September 1866.

Our letters must have crossed each other, for the one from you just received bears the date of the 24th, the very day I wrote. By this time you have mine begging you to play the good Samaritan as far as it is possible to my poor unhappy little misguided friend. Be very gentle with her for my sake.

Your account of your visit to the grotto was charming. I am sure that Biarritz will do you immense good, for you have to be out in the open air so much of the time when there; you cannot say no, and plead work as an excuse, when the empress commands your attendance, as I have known you capable of doing when a more humble mortal begged for your company! *Au fond*, I believe I am just a trifle jealous

of your beautiful empress. I fear me there is little chance this year of my being in Paris in October, or even November; I have half promised to join some friends in a trip to the Italian Lakes.

CCXCIV

PARIS, 1st January 1867.

Only one word to say that I still live; and, in spite of your long and strange silence, I wish you every good thing in the coming New Year.
M.

CCXCV

PARIS,

Wednesday, 3d April 1867.

I have just arrived from London, and much hope that you will get here to-morrow. You did not write to me that you were coming, and my only information is from the newspapers, which assure me that you have left Cannes, and will reach Paris on the 4th.

CCXCVI

PARIS,

Thursday, 29th April.

I could not come to you to-day, *cher ami*, as I promised, for my sister-in-law and two of her children are ill, and take up all my time.

It is the first day that I have missed seeing you since our expedition to the gallery of the Louvre on Friday the 5th of April, a day marked in my calendar with red letters spelling happiness. To-morrow I will meet you at our old and favourite trysting-place, unless I hear that you are unable to come.

MARIQUITA.

CCXCVII

(Letter missing)

CCXCVIII

PARIS, 27th June.

Do try and get tickets for the distribution of the prizes ; I am most anxious to see the ceremony. The sultan and all the foreign princes are to be present, and the whole affair is, they say, to be very brilliant.

CCXCIX

PARIS, 4th July.

But where were you ? I searched everywhere, and was much disappointed at not seeing you. I was amused, and everything went off very well, but I missed you.

CCC

—, 23^d July 1867.

The state of your health is at present the subject nearest to my heart, therefore let us begin at once upon that. Are you still confined to your room, still suffering, still low-spirited? Oh, *mon ami*, these last happy months have proved more vividly than ever before how dear you are to me. Get well quickly; there is so much still left in life for both of us. I have only just arrived, my maid is ill, and I cannot find anything I want, but I do not even stop to dress before writing to you, so anxious am I for better news than when I left you. Write to me as soon as you feel equal to the exertion.

CCCI

—, 1st September 1867.

I do indeed pity you with all my heart, but pity is such a poor, unsatisfactory sort of thing when one does nothing, can do nothing, to better the pain and suffering. Cannot something be done for this dreadful sleeplessness? What are doctors worth if they cannot find some help for you? Why did you send off the miniature of Marie Antoinette to the empress before I had the chance of seeing it?

You know my adoration for that most unhappy queen, and my great interest in anything and everything relating to her. I have not your horror of sad antiquities. Quite right are you to abuse me for my stupidity about the proofs, but when I say, like the children, "I am so sorry, and will never do it again," you will, I am sure, be merciful. I make a note of the articles you wish me to read. You ask when I return to Paris. Just so soon as I can possibly do so, and in the meantime I will look up everything of interest that I can find which may amuse you. Yes, Luther did hate the devil with a good deal of honest consistency. Which old castle is it in Germany where they show you a large splash of ink on the wall, and tell you that the Reformer threw his ink-bottle at his Satanic majesty, who came to tempt him as he worked away at his perfected Bible? I have seen the ink-stain, but forget the name of the *Schloss*. I shall hope for a better account of you in a day or two. Your last letter made almost the *tour du monde* before it reached me, which must explain the length of time I have seemingly taken to answer it.

CCCII

(Letter missing)

CCCIH

—, 23d October 1867.

Cher ami, could you see me you would never recognise me, for I am fast turning into a vegetable. I no longer have ideas. My brain has either shrivelled up, or evaporated, or *tout bonnement* died ; it certainly gives no sign of existence. It is a dreadful thing to stand by and watch your own brain depart, and yet it rather fascinates me. As a prisoner counts the hours by the sunlight on the wall of his cell mounting higher and higher, I count the time still left to my mental being by finding each day more ideas wanting, more empty spaces left. I should like to choose my vegetable when the moment comes for the final transformation scene. I would not be a potato, for the little elevations on its brown skin always look to me like warts ; neither would I be a red tomato, its veins are sometimes hideous ; peas, beans, Brussels sprouts, all these are *mesquin* ; beets are too winey, spinach much too soft, carrots look bilious ; no, on the whole, I choose corn, it is so clean, with smooth, pearly-white, even grains, and it has some presence about it while growing, with its dark green leaves so tall and cool, and itself so closely folded in the tasselled silk and outer protection cover. Pray choose corn also, if

the day ever comes when you too, from force of circumstances, grow to be a vegetable.

Do what I will, I cannot get away at present, and in this dreary spot my one only comfort is hearing from you. Go at once, I implore you, to Liebreich, and see what the trouble really is with your eyes. It is so foolish to neglect or put off a thing of this kind, when a few minutes might make everything all right. But do not contemplate any such horror as losing your sight. I do not believe there is anything serious the matter with your eyes, and no danger of such a calamity as this. You are over-worked, and the nerves of the eye are very sensitive to too long-continued action of the brain ; that is all, I feel certain, but all the same, do not lose another day before consulting Liebreich.

CCCIIV

—, 2d November 1867.

Of course I read the first part of Tourguenief's romance in the *Correspondent* after you told me in your last letter about correcting the proofs, but your extreme care in retaining all the improprieties which the piously-inclined Prince Augustin Galitzin had in his translation purposely left out, called for no comment. I saw that your effort to be immoral had been snubbed as it deserved to be, when in the printed story

that interview between Litvinof and Irène was cut down to an hour, although as a matter of fact I should think the exact time might under the circumstances be an unimportant detail, one, or two hours, the result would probably have been the same. For your sake I much regret M. Fould's death, but I cannot agree with the idea suggested by your words that his exit from life was too sudden a one. To fall asleep here and awake in whichever world we are destined to inhabit hereafter, is surely the best and least troublesome way of making the exchange of domicile. One gives no trouble to one's friends, there is no time for any hurried making up with Providence, which to my mind is simply offering Providence a gratuitous insult, and there are no heart-breaking good-byes. If you are ready to die, death does not find you unprepared ; if you are not ready, no frightened entreaties at the last moment can help you. No, could I choose, I would not hesitate between a lingering illness and a sudden death, I would ask humbly for the latter. Devoutly hoping to reach Paris before you leave, always your loyal friend.

CCCV

PARIS, 10th December 1867.

I have not yet recovered from the disappointment of arriving here just as you had left, but

you were so right to go when the sudden cold came. Are the Pope, Garibaldi, and M. de Bismarck still the three fates who are to decide your destiny? if so, from the present outlook of affairs your work is cut out for you. Why France continues to *dorloter* His Holiness while he treats her devotion so cavalierly I cannot understand. Paris is detestable.

My poor old friend M. D—— is very ill, and I think the chances are that he will bid this world adieu very shortly, and without getting any farther on his journey to Rome than this place where he now is. After all, he is eighty years old and his life is a burden, yet the poor old boy still clings to this mortal coil as though youth and pleasure were both at his command. It is passing strange this love of life for mere life's sake, yet one sees it every day in wretched infirm diseased creatures who, one would think, might be only too glad to exchange it for anything else. It is the old story, I suppose, of a comfortable familiarity with the ills one is accustomed to, and the dread of a bad bargain if they are given up for something unknown and uncomprehended, even with the chance of its being better. M.

CCCVI

(Letter missing)

CCCVII

PARIS, 2d February 1868.

Cher ami, I have sustained a great loss in the death of my poor old friend M. D——, and although I had small hopes of his recovery I did not think he would leave us quite so soon as he has. A still larger space is now left in my heart which your love and friendship alone can fill ; a still larger share of affection is left for me to bestow, and I give it all to you. I do indeed know you well enough to understand how this daily dragging monotony of suffering must try you and be far more difficult to bear than a sharper but less continued pain. Oh, what would I not give to be able to do something to lessen this trial for you ! I can only try and help you to bear it by cheering you as much as possible, and I feel sure one smile at least will come to your lips when I tell you that I once in travelling met a Mormon Elder, and nothing Dixon can say in his *New America*, which you tell me you have just been reading, can possibly be more funny than were the “little ways” of this animal. He was a long lank Yankee, loose-jointed, fishy-eyed, and altogether about as unattractive a looking specimen of the genus man as it is possible to imagine. With him were perhaps a dozen women and girls of different ages, and one pretty delicate young thing of about nineteen with sweet large blue

eyes, whose manner and appearance proved her condition in life to be far above that of the rest of the party. To this girl the Elder's whole attention was devoted ; the other recruits for Salt Lake City experienced but scant consideration from the saint, as he spent his time in instructing the beauty of the party in the doctrines of the Mormon faith. A fellow-traveller of mine grew much interested in the state of affairs, and finally interviewed the Elder and learned several curious facts. To begin with, very many of the unfortunate females who go out to Utah and join the Mormons are respectable English girls from the large manufacturing towns, who are persuaded to do so by just such brethren as this lank-limbed specimen whose gift of speech by the way must very greatly have outweighed his charms of person. Once arrived at the Mormon settlement, Brigham Young has the first choice of the new aspirants for the place of wife ; after he has chosen, the Elders follow in order of rank and select the new members of their households. My fellow-traveller asked the saint in question if he meant to marry the pretty girl he was so attentive to, and looking very sheepish the great awkward fellow said, if Brigham Young did not take her for himself he certainly meant to speak for her ! No, Talleyrand's *mot* about the Americans was severe, but I rather fancy the severity to have been tempered with justice.

I was much pleased with your *tartine sur Pouchkine*. Trusting that this may find you really better, your friend always, M.

CCCVIII

PARIS, 15th February 1868.

I sincerely hope that you will find me in Paris when you return, and I shall make all my arrangements with that object in view. You are far too melancholy at present to be left to your own devices, and it shall be my first care to amuse you; also, we must try and have some walks as in the olden days. What a difference there is in the way different people and things, even memories, grow old. Some events, which at the time they happened seemed to be the veriest trifles, grow unpleasant, repulsive, absolutely loathsome, as time passes and they persistently take their places in our life as unmovable hateful souvenirs; while others equally unimportant at the time of happening grow more tender, more winning, and infinitely more dear with each day that separates them from the actual moment of occurrence, until to part with them would be pain inexpressible.

I shall like *Fumée* in book form, *mille remerciements* for having it bound for me; but do not send it, keep it and bring it with you; when I thank people whom I like, it is a

pleasure to thank them in person. Do you know, I begin to think that we have had too much pen, ink, and paper in our mutual lives—you and I. Once, long ago, I asked you if you did not think a friendship based upon those three things rather too much of an experiment. As an experiment, I am fain to confess that it has succeeded ; but I have an idea which rather haunts me, that we could have been just as good and loyal friends without this triple group—with fewer letters and less absence from one another. What think you?—does your fear of too close companionship bringing weariness and satiety shrink at this idea? Have you already exclaimed, "*Jamais de la vie ! Elle est folle*"? It is only an idea, which, as I said, rather haunts me, but the very fact of its being haunting proves it to be of another spirit world, the wandering ghost of a lost and dead possibility. Let it pass unharmed.

CCCIX

P——, 16th June 1868.

I am here to attend the marriage of Madame de C——'s niece—a timid, gentle little thing, who is bound to be miserable with the man who has been chosen for her—a *boulevardier* of the most pronounced type. When she weeps, as weep she most assuredly will, long and often,

X

let us hope the vicomtesse's coronet embroidered in the corner of the handkerchief with which she dries her eyes will bring her consolation solid enough to make up for a life which I should not call worth living. *Chacun à son goût !* What a mercy it is that every one has not the same tastes. But to marry for the mere sake of marrying seems to be the craze of the moment, and if people like to take jumps in the dark, why should one officiously torment them with turning up the gas? The 15th of July will find me in Paris; that is, at this moment I see nothing which can possibly prevent me from going there; but it seems to me that lately *le diable lui-même se mêle de nos affaires*, so often has the unexpected and unwished-for arrived to prevent us from meeting; however, I hope for the best. And now to go and wish happiness to the little bride who, I know for a certainty, is going to be miserable!

CCCX

(Letter missing)

CCCXI

BOULOGNE, 7th August 1868.

You ask whether our last promenade left an impression on my mind? Let me repeat your

own words and say that I find it a "*très-doux souvenir*"—one of those memories which steal over one as the long summer twilight deepens, and the first pale stars come shyly out into heaven's blue ; which makes one long to be quiet and alone, that no word may disturb the after-glow of a deep warm joy which has passed, but which has left a light of happiness like the lurid fire of red gold lighting an evening sky after the sun that caused it has sunk out of sight. Ah, love, how well you have loved me back !

Every one I ever knew or heard of who has indulged in the uncertain pleasure of living beyond his income I now find established in this place. Lord Henry P—— and his pretty wife are here, absolutely bankrupt ; and from the number of captains and colonels one meets I should judge that the better part of the English army live in fear of arrest for debt. The rock you ask about is, as you say, a monstrosity, but just what it was intended for I do not know. I will ask some of these valiant officers who know the place.

Did you, when passing through Boulogne, ever visit the Aquarium ? It amuses me extremely, and you who delight in uncanny creatures of all kinds would positively revel in some of the distorted and demon-like fish and crabs which nearly give me the nightmare. I have arranged to remain here until the 3d of

next month, when I must go to London for at least a fortnight on business.

CCCXII

LONDON, 4th September 1868.

Frankly, I do not like your story of the *Ours*. It is in its ideas as distorted and unpleasant as the nightmare crabs I told you of. Do change the plot—the composition is too good to be expended upon such a subject; at least modify the experiences of the *Ours*, and leave out some of the suggestive phrases. Oh no, the idea is too awful; how could you imagine such a plot? I am so afraid that you will publish it at once that I stop to write no other word, and send these hurried lines to beg you to reconsider the story. Direct to me No. — Clarges Street, Piccadilly.

CCCXIII

LONDON, 1st October 1868.

I am still detained here, and am very impatient at the delay. Do tell me where a person can with the greatest propriety insult another? Etiquette forbids that it should be in the house of the one insulted; common politeness, not to say decency, decrees that it

may not be in the habitation of the insulter ; and still less is it possible for the process to be accomplished at the dwelling of a mutual friend. What spot, then, is available, save the open street or the high seas, both of which would present manifest difficulties, the foremost of them being the slender chance of encountering the person for whom the insult is all prepared and ready before time has a chance of lessening the wholesome effect intended to be wrought by it !

Still another question—my mind is, you see, in an inquiring mood to-night—who originated the expression “false as hell”? Whoever did so had not, to my thinking, a logical brain. Surely hell is more consistent and true in its promises than are most things in this mutable world of ours. It pledges itself to punish, and we are distinctly given to understand that we obtain punishment at its hands. It clearly states upon what terms a dwelling within its precincts can be obtained, and those fulfilling the conditions are apt to find themselves denizens of its halls. It says plainly, in the words of the poet, “Leave hope behind all ye who enter here,” and once inside the gates, hope and hell’s inmate are parted for ever. It stipulates that evil shall take the place of good, that despair shall drive out trustful confidence, that eternal woe shall stand in the place of everlasting joy,—and in which of these

agreements does it fail us? Not one. False as hell!—should the saying not rather be “true and certain as hell, steadfast as Satan”?

Why I ask you these questions I cannot tell, unless it is that in thinking of this lengthened absence from you, such a bitter aching loneliness has swept over my whole being that I feel engulfed, choked, swallowed up in it, while all the solid foot-holding landmarks in life seem at the same time to be swept away by it. It appals me when I remember how few out of the millions of human beings who exist in the world, would care if I were literally annihilated and wiped out from the face of the earth. Would one single one? would you, tried friend as you are? Look how quickly the gaps are filled up; see the short space of time it takes men and women to forget. They glibly put all responsibility of replacing the lost upon Time, poor old Time, with his back already bowed and bent, who yet must bear all that coming generations may elect to put upon him. In turn they flatter and abuse him, trust to him to heal all wounds, and effusively give him the credit when the scars grow fainter and fainter until they are lost to sight; or else belabour him, and say it is he who with relentless and unseemly haste demands that new faces shall replace the old, fresh lives fill the void left by those that are ended. Poor, patient old Time. But abused as he is, how many

lessons he can teach ; how many rough corners grow smooth under his care, what jagged edges are polished down, and how wise we grow, and tolerant with a great weariness which is too tired to care very much for anything. What does it matter, we cry bitterly, when it must all end? Satan is true and death is certain, and no man can tell what comes after. Now be cheerful (if you can) ; make plans, take keen interest in the trifling petty things around you, force them to grow to great matters of importance big with possibilities ; set your whole mind upon obtaining some paltry thing which you know secretly is not worth a single thought ; be ready to circumvent others who are fighting to outwit you in the great social game ; bring all your intelligence, your intellect, if you chance to have any, to bear upon social effects and success ; emulate and outdo the struggling striving wretches around you who are spurring on in the mad race which all hope to win. To "get on in life," that is what they are, one and all, trying to do ; get on, no matter by what means. If rudeness pays, be rude ; snub your best and oldest friend ; forget the kindly deed another may have done you long ago if now he stands in your way ; put aside and crush under foot relentlessly ; be blind and deaf when people from whom you can obtain nothing, and for whom you have no further use, are within sight and hearing. On—on at any cost to self-respect,

or conscience, or manhood, or true womanhood ; what are these but mere high-sounding phrases which mean nothing to sensible creatures whose aim in life is to "get on ;" wise prudent souls who know what they want, and mean to obtain it by fair means or foul ! Doubtless you are wondering why I should rave in this manner, and probably you have already decided that I am delirious. I begin my letter by asking at what place I can best insult a fellow-mortal, and continue by a scathing denunciation of people who after all are only living up to what they have chosen as their ideal. A recent insight into the utter hollowness and heartlessness of London life has suggested this train of thought, not that I did not know it all before—the vanity of vanities of London's social struggle ; but a friend came to see me to-day who gravely undertook to prove that it was right, and wise, and just as it should be ; and the worst of it all is that he honestly believes what he says, and with zeal worthy of a better cause religiously endeavours to live up to his creed—"Get on at any cost." It all seemed so pitifully small and narrow that it depressed me, and induced this sensation of overwhelming loneliness which I ought not to have attributed solely to your absence. The solitude which separation from you brings, has never the acrid tinge of bitterness which my dreary loneliness of to-night is weighted with. But London

social life is too intricate a subject to be treated lightly. It is a fiercely hardening process, and if the rule of demand and supply can be adapted to it as it can to most things, the hardening is necessary in order to withstand the pressure. The great social machine grinds on steadily and relentlessly, and if the material brought under its sharp points and heavy weights is soft and yielding, it is simply crushed to shapeless pulp and disappears, while the hard resisting substance, on the contrary, grows bright and polished. In the slang used by the English lower animals, *i.e.* the domestic servants, you must "stand up" to London society if you intend to hold your own against its insolent aggressiveness. Belinda is the romantic name of the lodging-house "slavey" who is at present the presiding genius of my apartment. Now slaveys ought, by every rule of English life, to restrict their remarks to "Yes'm," "No ma'am," and "Thank you," this latter upon all occasions and *à propos* to nothing at all; Belinda, however, is an original, and difficult to suppress. She will talk, and you may just as well make up your mind to the fact, and take it as you would the screeching of a steam-engine—stop your ears and let it blow. I close my mental ears while the girl tells me of her grievances against her mistress, the smooth-tongued landlady who to me is all subservient civility. This morning my understanding caught a phrase

while the girl was speaking which remained with me—"You must just stand up to her, ma'am, or she'll grind you." Yes, Belinda has supplied me with the words which describe best how London society must be treated. I shall certainly watch Belinda carefully during the remainder of my stay here, and see how this "stand up to" process works. But oh, how all this makes me long still more for my peaceful cheery little *pied à terre* in Paris, and my half Bohemian, wholly pleasant life! Let others struggle if they will, and "get on" until there is no farther goal to reach, but, for myself, I would choose a few good tried friends and a free existence.

Such a delightful story has just been told me of an old Quaker, one of the "Society of Friends," who said to his wife—"All the world is queer except thee and me, and thee is a little queer."

What a dear that old Quaker must have been. You cannot say in regard to this letter what you wrote in yours of 2d September—" *Ne lâchez pas tant vos lettres, de façon à ne mettre que trois mots à la ligne.*" If you only do not find my epistle of to-night too long and rambling, I shall be content. Write to me quickly that the baths at Montpellier are doing you no end of good. *À vous de cœur.*

MARIQUITA.

CCCXIV

—, 1st December 1868.

Merci! You are really very amiable to make the changes in the story, and it may be, after all, that your *Ours* will not be so horrible. I think you were wise, however, not to send so dangerous an animal to roam at will among the brilliant company at Compiègne; the empress might not have been particularly gratified by your attention.

I am here until Christmas, and quite a pleasant party are staying at the *château*. About the 27th of December Madame de T—— and I are going by a circuitous route to Italy, making Florence our final destination. I feel sure that some of your letters have miscarried, for I refuse to believe that you have not been well enough to write. *Cher ami*, do you sometimes think that I do not write minutely enough of your health, or refer often enough to what you tell me of it? Would you know the truth? it is that there are some thoughts I cannot think, some words which even to myself I dare not speak. I am so grieved that the baths at Montpellier did not help you as much this second time as they did the first, and it makes my heart ache when you tell me of your continued fight with this terrible cough and the fits of suffocation. Do not dread so that

the winter may prove a cold one ; only enjoy the fine weather while you have it, and remember how often it continues through the whole year at Cannes. You could not be in a better place, and I hope much from its climate, which always suits you. *Dieu vous garde.* Rosini's death was sad. I had not heard of the illness of Lamartine and Berryer. I send you not only the name of one amusing book, as you ask for, but a whole list, almost all of which I find more than readable.

CCCXV

FLORENCE, 6th January 1869.

One sentence of your letter makes me forget all the rest—" *Que faut-il faire ? je n'en sais rien, mais souvent j'ai grand désir que cela finisse.*"

O *mon ami*, do you know what that means to me ? So often now thoughts come to me which I dare not put in words, but they haunt me after reading that you suffer, that you make no progress, that you grow worse ; and now you tell me this, that you wish the end might come. Oh, love, love, love, I could not live without you ! Do you know what the world would be for me with you not here ? A leaden sky, with stars and moon and sun gone out ; flowers without scent or colour, trees bare of

foliage, birds with no note of song, all glad things turned to mocking memories; days of utter weariness, with longing, aching arms stretched out to empty space; a heart starved and hungry, with only stones for food; nights when lying dreams would cheat me to believe that once again you clasped me in a warm, living embrace, only that when the waking came my sense of loss might grow anew with double bitterness! Surely hell has no torture greater than a heart can feel when its other better, dearer self is taken, and it is left with all the tired restlessness and weary, poisoned, passionate pain. If we could but go together, you and I, hand in hand through the dark valley and down into the deep, dark waters which lead to the great unknown. Dear God, was it good to decree this awful, final trial of tearing asunder lives grown to one, of wrenching nerves and fibres joined and twined together with years of daily loving sympathy, only that one may go forth bruised and bleeding to a new, uncomprehended life all solitary, while the other is left to live on the old existence, with all its charm crushed out and ended? It is so hard, so terribly hard, to believe the words spoken by a voice never yet heard, as it says to the first, "Be not afraid, for I am with you," and to the other, "Weep not, I will comfort you." We know so well the voice we have loved and lived with, and feel so certain that

it understands our every want, that if we might only go together we must be happy, whatever strange, new thing be waiting for us, but this grave, far-off, unseen One who promises, Him we cannot really know, and we fear to meet Him all alone. No, I cannot, will not, live without you. Every night will I pray that if there be a God in heaven merciful and loving, let Him take me first, that I may never know the irremediable loss of losing you. I could not bear the torture. I should go mad with grief, and do some frantic, senseless thing far better left undone. No, you must not die before me ; it cannot, shall not be !

Wer besser liebt ? You asked this once, and I promptly answered that I loved best ; but as I think of that, another thought comes with it. Shall I leave to you the pain I am afraid to bear myself ? You have told me more than once that you could not now, after so long, live your life without me ; and, ill and suffering as you are, I would pray to leave you here alone, because I cannot face the coming years should you go first ! *Wer besser liebt ?* Oh, is it not the one who up to the last would tend and cheer, and guard from extra pain of mind or body, bearing her own woe silently, that no tear or sob may disturb the few short hours left, or distress the heart to which she has long since given her own ? Would this not be more loyal love and friendship than to save herself

from pain and leave the loneliness to him she loves? .

Ah, love! I would bear it all, and say no word, if by so doing you might be saved one hour of weary solitude.

CCCXVI

(Letter missing)

CCCXVII

PARIS, 20th April 1869.

I have returned here, as I could not remain so far away with such continued bad news from you. If you are not well enough to come to Paris I will join you at Cannes. I am very anxious, and long to see you. *Dieu vous bénisse.*

MARIQUITA.

CCCXVIII

(Letter missing)

CCCXIX

PARIS,

Monday, 3d May 1869.

They told me that they thought you were sleeping when I called this afternoon, so I would not allow them to disturb you, and

merely left the book. Are you rested after your journey, and better? I have so many plans and ideas for amusing you, and no end of funny stories to tell you. You remember Mr. X——, whom you met in London; that handsome, clever, agreeable man. Well, his son came to see me yesterday, so absurdly like his father, and so disappointingly unlike. Do you not hate an inferior copy of a good original, be it of man, beast, or thing? I do; I detest it, as I mortally detest anything verging on a sham. A mistake which this promising youth made in his French positively convulsed me; it is too good not to repeat. He has come here to remain some time, has taken an apartment in the Boulevard Malesherbes, and was telling me of his experiences with French *fournisseurs*, and the difficulty he had had in engaging servants. The *valet de pied*, he thought, asked him too high wages, but after a good deal of haggling he consented to give him so much *par mois, et la blanchisseuse!* After telling me the story, during the telling of which my guardian angel kindly kept my face straight for me, I having lost all control over its expression, *cet imbécile*, with the greatest calmness, assured me that the French language did not trouble him in the least; he found it perfectly easy!

I will come and see you whenever you wish me to.

CCCXX

PARIS,

Friday Evening, 11th June.

The weather is so threatening at present that I much fear our little expedition for to-morrow does not stand a very good chance. Let me know in the morning how you feel, and what you would like to do. With this I send you some violets, and devoutly trusting that you did not take cold at the Exposition yesterday, am yours lovingly and loyally.

CCCXXI

—, 26th June 1869.

Naturally I am cross at being obliged to leave you in Paris in order to see about an unpleasant business here; but as it is one of those things which is nobody's fault, and is disagreeable with an abstract, impersonal kind of disagreeableness, there is absolutely nothing to be done but bear the affliction with as good a grace as possible. I think matters can be settled between the conflicting parties, only it may take time besides, . . . Do not tell me that you have the same detestable weather in Paris that we have here,—it would be really too cruel. Is not hypocrisy the most displeasing quality allowed for the use of mortals, or do I overrate its unpleasantness?

Y

CCCXXII

—, 3d July.

And so to-day, in the year of grace 1869, you think it a miracle that it is possible for people to talk of love in the woods when the weather is bad! How I laughed, as a few mausing dates came to my mind. One, a certain day when after hours spent out at Versailles in a pouring rain, I was asked upon coming home whether I had a fever. And again, a windy afternoon at Saint Germain; and still another stormy morning, when we found the gardens of the Luxembourg a paradise! Have you forgotten? No, nor have I; and a miracle like this will be worked for generations yet to come, as it was worked for us, and for those long long before us. Happy miracle, ever new and for ever unforgettable!

But it is, I repeat, too cruel that just when you most need sunshine this miserable weather should last so persistently; let us hope that it is almost over. I am so glad that you are going to Saint Cloud; when there *pensez un peu à moi*.

CCCXXIII

—, 15th August 1869.

"*Tout passe, tout casse, tout lasse!*" It is not a cheerful quotation, but how unpleasantly

true it is! You must have met that pretty little Blanche H——, who threatened to go into a rapid decline if she were not allowed to marry Sir Harry ——; and the popular M. de G——, who threatened a general extermination of the race if he were not permitted to wed the beauty of the London season, Lady Violet ——.

Well, just these two particulars sat directly behind me at the play the last time I was in Paris; not, *bien entendu*, with their corresponding halves, for whom they had been ready to undergo so much; not at all, but with each other—a devoted couple; while the husband of Blanche and the wife of Sir Harry were God knows where. Are we really a remarkable example, *cher ami*, in that our affection has so well stood the test of time, and can it be that it has done so from the reason you so unhesitatingly give . . .? It is a queer world, a very queer one. Should there really be no other life after this, as you would have me believe, I query much whether one makes just the best use of it, or gets all the most out of it. I am delighted that your visit to Saint Cloud has done you so much good; this eucalyptus remedy may be the very thing,—have faith in it, I beseech you, and never mind the man who fell from the fifth story and grew philosophical while descending.

It is a bad day for me to give you my honest opinion about the *Ours*, as the beginning of

my letter may suggest to you, and you will not be pleased at it. Why try and circulate a thing you know to be *risqué* merely because you find the riskiness so cleverly veiled that an ordinary reader would fail to discover it? You who with your pen might so easily make men better, not worse—instruct them as well as amuse. Of course you are disgusted with this idea, and will call it narrow-minded, not moving with the times, etc. etc. Well, do not give it a second thought; to-morrow, or, no, the next time I see you, I may think differently; it would not be the first time that a few words from you had changed my ideas, would it?

The last sentence of your letter reproaches me as I re-read it. You ask me to write you something gay, because you are very melancholy, and instead I plainly show you that blue devils and I are *très-lé* to-day, and that anything further removed from "gay" than is the state of my personality it would be hard to imagine. If I cannot cheer I had better not depress you, which I feel that I am doing with every line I write; so I will say adieu before I do further harm.

CCCXXIV

(Letter missing)

CCCXXV

PARIS, 3d December 1869.

Madame Dosne as a mother-in-law certainly proved the exception to the general rule, and like so many exceptions to rules, grammatically speaking, was a far more valuable thing than the rule itself. Poor M. Thiers must indeed be quite lost without her. To me it is a thing not possible to understand that the wife of a man should not share in his ambitions and plans; should not help them in every way, make herself perfectly *au fait* of the situation whatever it may be, and aid her husband in every known manner permissible; I had almost added "or not permissible." It is my belief that a woman can do so much, accomplish such marvels, in assuring the success of a man if she will but devote her mind to doing so—use her tact, her common sense, every fascination she may possess, to win friends and influential support for her husband in whatever line of life he may happen to find himself. It is a pet theory of mine,—I believe in it thoroughly. I *know* it is possible for a woman to do all this, and surely there could be no better way for her to employ any talents which may have been bestowed upon her. And yet look how the generality of men's wives hamper rather than help them. Look at Madame Thiers herself. To me it is inexplicable; I gaze at women in a sort of

stupefaction, they seem so blind to their opportunities. Thank God! I can honestly lay the flattering unction to my soul that while I had a husband I was true to him in both letter and spirit, and did for him in every sense "the best that in me lay." It is not a bad memory to have stored in a quiet corner of my mind, that when the end came he still called me the best friend that he had ever had. And I told you once that I thought I could be a good friend; have I proved my words?

Tell me that you are better, and that you suffer less. Would that I could give you my health and strength, and suffer in your place.

There is an uneasiness in the political air which grows steadily, at least so it appears to me. A half-defined restlessness, an uncertainty, that is almost impossible to seize in words, but which one feels in every vein. O this France, "unstable as water"! Will there never be a permanent quiet for her—a more solid basis? I doubt it.

CCCXXVI

PARIS, 10th January 1870.

Your letter has almost broken my heart. *La mort!* dear God, I cannot say that name and yours together! I am blinded as I merely write the letters which have no meaning for me,

blinded with salt smarting tears which burn my brain before they fill my eyes, and scorch and sear my heart ; your heart it is, and with you gone how can it beat again or ever throb, save to a dull dead agony which means a ghastly living death ! “ *Une mort lente et très douloureuse,*” you say, and I read the words but cannot grasp the sense. Not this for *you* ! Oh no, it cannot, cannot be ! Let it be mine if you will ; I will bear it all and more, if by so doing I can save you from one single pang ; but not this for you ! With your brilliant intellect, your keen fancy, your delicate appreciation, your love of life ! It is again this sudden cold which makes you feel worse, and once passed, and with warmth and sunshine back again, you will be better. Tell me it is nothing more than this, take back those dreadful words and think no more of them ; I cannot give you up !

You wish me *une bonne année*—could any year be good or any gift it brought me be worth the having if only ill were the portion it gave to you ? O heart, dear heart of mine, take away the mortal sadness your words bring me ; tell me that this fear of yours has no foundation in reality, that it is a mere fancy which the chill of the east wind and the icy breath of the frost have cruelly breathed over you, and which the first glad burst of sunshine will melt and thaw away, when you will be yourself again, brilliant and well and loving as

of old. It must be so ; no other thing is possible.

CCCXXVII

PARIS, 15th February 1870.

I try to think that much wisdom lies concealed in the old saying, "No news is good news," and to fancy you almost strong again, and not sad and suffering. The *émeute*, with so pitiful a hero as Victor Noir, must have confirmed your opinion of the general degeneracy of the times. The word revolution is one not unmentioned now, and the under-current of restlessness of which I spoke to you some time ago seems to pervade all classes, taking various forms of expression. At the Tuileries, everything is gay and *insouciant*, outwardly at least ; but there are those who pretend that the gaiety is assumed, and the carelessness more of a mask than a reality. The world and men seem more mad than ever, and seem not to know what thing they really want. Some speak of a *plébiscite*. I have been reading Motley's *Dutch Republic*, renewing my contempt for the Duke of Alva and my pity for Count Egmont and Count Horn. Their tragic death was the first thing I thought of when I stood in the great square at Brussels, whose architectural effects suggest, as Motley says, "in some degree the meretricious union between Oriental and a

corrupt Grecian art, accomplished in the mediæval midnight ;" with the splendid Hôtel de Ville and its daring spire, the "graceful but incoherent" *façade* of the *Brood-huis*, and the lesser palaces and buildings near.

You say that you are writing for yourself, and *perhaps* for me, a little history where love plays the principal part. Would it be possible for you to write such a tale for yourself alone, leaving me out? Ah no, not if your fiction is founded upon truth. Two lives entwined with mutual hopes and joys, sorrows shared together, pleasures doubled by being divided, love glorified and intensified by reflection from heart to heart, faith and loyalty made living truths from a great mutual trust—is not this the *motif* of your history, and could it treat of only one alone?

CCCXXVIII

(Letter missing)

CCCXXIX

PARIS, 20th May 1870.

I have, I think, found just the apartment you wish for, not far from me, *au premier*, *no entresol*, and with a moderate amount of steps. Shall I have your books, etc., moved for you before you come, and all things, so far as possible, in

readiness for you? I had promised to spend the entire summer with my sister-in-law at P——, but have written to her that I will instead join her at once, as I must get back to Paris about the middle of June; thus I shall be here when you return. Later, if you are better, I can rejoin her and remain with her during the autumn. Let me know of any changes you may wish made in regard to the apartment, and I will do my best to have everything comfortable for you.

CCCXXX

P——, 1st July 1870.

Oh, to be kept here day after day when all my thoughts are with you, and I long with every fibre of my being to follow them! It is very, very hard, yet I cannot leave when my poor brother depends so entirely upon me in his trouble. To lose two children within a fortnight, and to have your wife at death's door, is too great a trial for a man to be left to bear alone. I must remain with my brother for the present; it would be heartless to desert him, but nothing less than this would detain me an hour longer from your side.

You must be glad to be in Paris at this moment of excitement, with the keen interest which you take in the political situation. Do

you think it possible that war with Prussia can be avoided? I tremble at the thought of it, and at the remembrance of the military manœuvres which I witnessed in Germany. Can French soldiery stand an attack from such machines of war as all Prussians wearing uniforms are? It is a terrible question when one thinks what it really means, and what the result must be if the answer is unfavourable.

CCCXXXI

P——, 25th July 1870.

Cher ami, do not dwell so much upon the coming cold which you always seem to dread; there cannot be two successive winters as severe as the last one, and once at Cannes you will certainly be better.

My poor sister-in-law is still dangerously ill, and her husband is wellnigh distracted with the loss of his children, to whom he was devoted. The world looks very bleak and drear to me to-day in spite of summer sunshine, and my courage begins to fail me. I am not by nature superstitious, yet, when for the first time I wrote 1870, the figures seemed to enclose some sinister meaning, some warning of woe which made me shudder even as I smiled at the foolish silliness of the fancy. Perhaps this atmosphere of danger in the political world,

added to the depressing effect of illness all about me, is the cause of this odd sense of impending sorrow. I am sorry that you think the war with Prussia cannot be prevented ; alas, will France never be content to let well alone !

The assurance of the physicians that you are better is a great comfort to me ; they must know, and even if you yourself cannot see the change there must still be one and on the favourable side. Thank God for this encouraging news ; it removes part at least of the heavy weight on my heart, and I begin to dream of happy days still in store for us, long walks, and heart-communing as in the earlier times when love came smiling with so many promises. To-day it is good to know that with the love still ours, there is also rich fruition of the promises ; deep fulness of perfected love is as much dearer than its dawning dreams as the flower in perfect beauty is lovelier than the opening bud, or as the hope fulfilled is better than the first faint half-formed wish. Tried, true, and perfect friend, good-night.

CCCXXXII

P— 19th August 1870.

There is but little change in my sister-in-law, whose health still causes us the very gravest

anxiety. The war news is the great topic of interest here, as I presume it must be throughout France. It is well for the country to be hopeful, but it strikes me that there is an over-confidence in the tone taken. I never believe in under-rating an enemy, and that I think is precisely the danger now to be feared. It seems terrible that at this late day in the civilisation of the world so much bloodshed is necessary among such nations as Germany and France ; the fact appears to be an ironical comment upon modern progress and nineteenth century Christianity.

The longing to be with you grows on me ; I feel each day a stronger wish to be near you, to see you, and to hear your voice, to feel your hand in mine and to look into your eyes as you tell me it is good to meet again. Only a little time now and all this will be. A change must soon come in my poor brother's wife ; if for the better, I shall leave at once and come to you ; if an end comes to the poor thing's sufferings, my brother will at once join his regiment, and then equally will I come to you if you wish me to do so. *Je vous embrasse de cœur, cher ami*, trusting that this may find you stronger and better, no blue devils, no melancholy, no bodily pain. I linger before writing the word adieu ; we have said it too often, dear friend, let us erase it from our dictionary, and until we choose another to take its place say only *au revoir*.

CCCXXXIII

P—, 16th September 1870.

Do you recollect my once telling you that if you should join the Immortals (in verity and truth) the light of life would cease to shine for me? Why, I wonder, does the remembrance of that saying obtrude itself so persistently upon my thoughts to-day? Your last letter was so much more like your old self, and in it you tell me that for some days past you have felt better, and you write with so much interest of the exciting events going on around us. If only our letters did not take so long in going and coming! It is hard to wait patiently for news of you, but I feel sure that you are really improving, and that we shall meet again shortly. I will follow your advice and remain for the present at this place, but if I thought you were not so well, nothing could keep me from you. It would be cruel of you not to tell me should this be the case. Would it not be better for you to go to Cannes even if the journey is a long one? Do think of it seriously. I will join you there if you like, and in fancy we will live the old days over again, the happy old days of storm and sunshine, quarrels and loving reconciliations. Let me hear soon, and remember that to-day as in long days past I am always

MARIQUITA.

Even as she wrote these words, the beautiful *Inconnue*, her other self to whom she spoke was fast nearing the dusky horizon, where eternal night was drawing on apace. The eyes she had kissed so often were soon to feel that last soft kiss, unlike all others, which seals from tears and soothes to everlasting dreamless sleep. He would read her words, perchance press the fast paling lips to the characters her hand had traced, and then would pen once more an answer, but only once. It is no good-bye, this last response of his, only a few words saying that he is ill, but mentioning at the same time a slight improvement. He tells her that he will write to her soon again, and adds that she must send to his house at Paris for some books which he ought to have sent her before his departure, but there is not much in the short letter, and none of his usual wit or sparkle. He writes as though tired, very tired. The last words are, "*Adieu, je vous embrasse.*"

A footnote to the *Letters* states that two hours later Prosper Mérimée died; thus almost his last thought, perhaps his very last, was for his love, his faithful friend, *L'Inconnue*.

ÉPILOGUE

2

ÉPILOGUE

BY the tideless sea at Cannes on a summer day I had fallen asleep, and the plashing of the waves upon the shore had doubtless made me dream. When I awoke the yellow paper-covered volumes of Prosper Mérimée's *Lettres à une Inconnue* lay beside me ; I had been reading the book before I fell asleep, but the answers—had they ever been written, or had I only dreamed ?

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